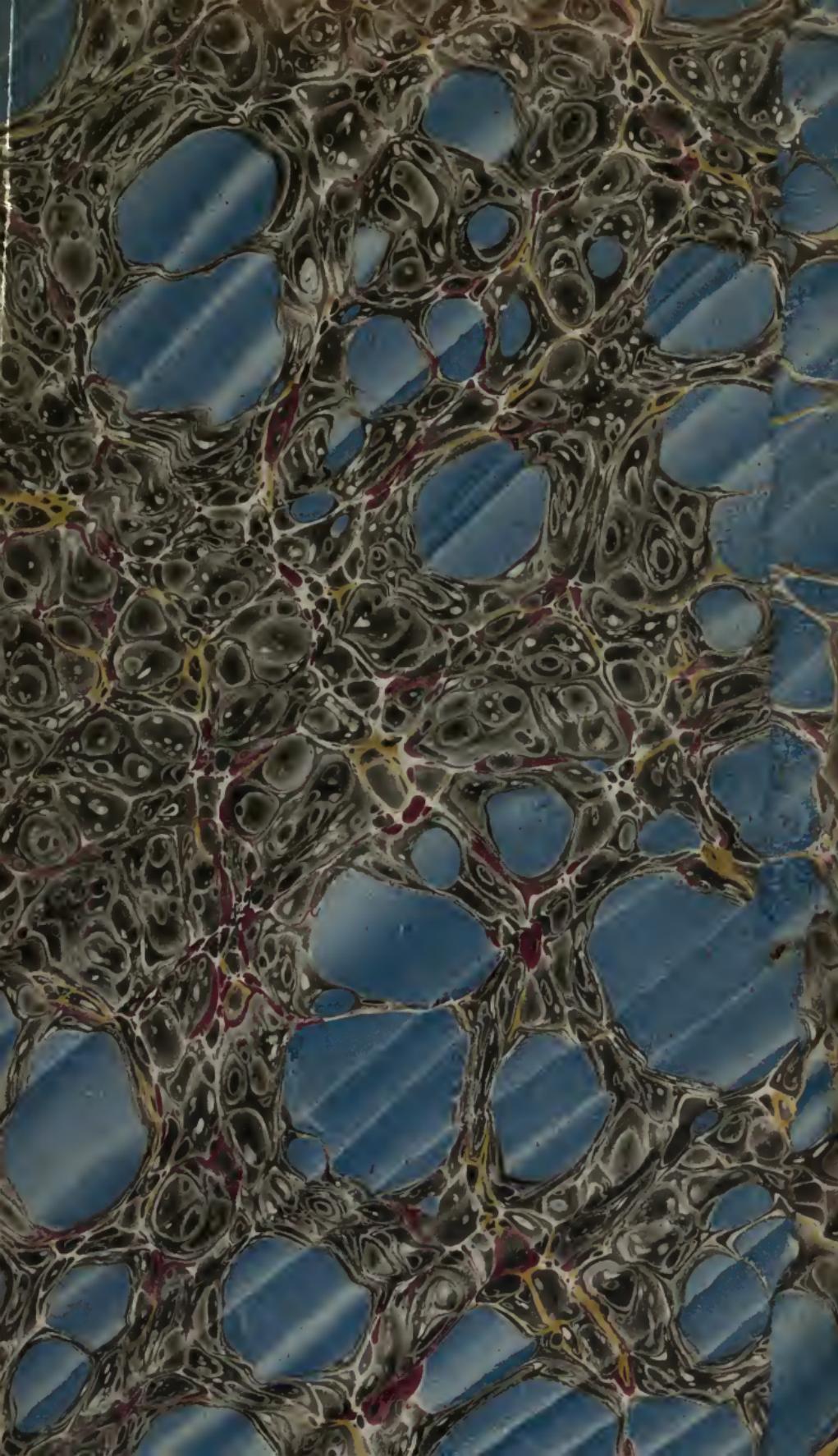


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THE
P R A I R I E - B I R D.

BY THE HON.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS MURRAY.

AUTHOR OF
“TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA.”

Ferdinand. Most sure the Goddess
On whom the airs attend— My prime request
Which I do last pronounce is, O you wonder,
If you be maid or no?
Miranda. No wonder, Sir,
But certainly a maid.
Ferdinand. My language, Heavens !

Tempest, Act i.



IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE LURE OF
CALIFORNIA
PRAIRIE-BIRD.

CHAPTER I.

WAR-EAGLE AND HIS PARTY REACH THE DESERTED CAMP OF THE OSAGES.—THE LATTER FALL IN WITH A STRANGE BAND OF INDIANS, AND MAHEGA APPEARS IN THE CHARACTER OF A DIPLOMATIST.

A BRIGHT sun shone upon the little valley, which, twenty-four hours before, had been deserted by the Osages, when a tall form glided cautiously to its entrance, half concealed by the bushes that fringed its edge. Glancing hastily around, War-Eagle, for he it was who was guiding his party in pursuit, returned to announce to them his belief that the enemy had decamped; nevertheless, the usual precautions were adopted against a surprise. A small body of Delawares were thrown forward to reconnoitre the neighbouring woods, under the command of Attō, while the chief, accompanied by

Reginald, Ethelston, and the rest of the party, entered the deserted Osage encampment; every nook and cranny among the adjacent woods and rocks were diligently explored, and not till then were they convinced that their crafty foe had given them the slip. While the rest of the party were busied in this search, the eye of Reginald Brandon rested in absorbed attention upon the spot to which his steps had been first led, as if by the power of instinct; it was a small plot, completely sheltered by the rock which guarded the front of the recess; a few holes made in the turf showed where pegs had been driven in to secure a circular tent. "Here," said Reginald to Ethelston, "here is the spot trodden by her dear feet—here have her weary limbs reposed during the long watches of the night—here have her prayers been offered up at noon and eve for that rescue which we seem doomed, alas ! never to accomplish!"

"Say not a word, my son," said Paul Müller, laying his hand kindly on the excited Reginald's shoulder; "say not a word, my son, which would seem to limit the power or the mercy of that Being to whom those prayers were addressed. Hope is the privilege, perseverance the duty of man; let us faithfully use these bounties, and leave the issue to His allwise disposal."

"I am indeed ashamed of my hasty expression, worthy Father," said Reginald, frankly; "but I

will draw encouragement from your suggestion, and banish every desponding thought, while there remains a chance of success, or even a glimmering of hope."

Wingenund, who had approached unobserved to the side of his friend, whispered to him, in a low voice, "Netis is right: here it was that Olitipa sat when Wingenund was a prisoner; she is not far, the Lenape warriors never lose a trail."

While they were thus conversing, a messenger from War-Eagle summoned them to a consultation on the plan of pursuit which should be adopted.

It may not be unnecessary to inform those who have never been upon the prairies of the Far-West, that a trail is easily followed when the party pursued is in full retreat, because any indication of footsteps is a sure guide to its course; whereas, in a camping-place, where a party has remained for a considerable time, numberless paths are trodden in various directions during its stay, some for hunting excursions, some for bringing water, others for leading horses to and from their pasture, so that the pursuer is at a loss to discover by which of these paths those of whom he is in pursuit have retreated.

War-Eagle being well aware that Mahéga was not less skilled than himself in all the stratagems and devices of Indian warfare, set about this difficult task with a deliberation that did not suit the

eager temper of Reginald Brandon; nevertheless, he had so much confidence in the sagacity of his Indian brother, that he restrained all expression of his impatience, and agreed without objection to the method proposed by him at the council. Agreeably to this plan, Paul Müller, Perrot, and several of the hunters and Delawares, remained on guard at the camp, while the main body, divided into small parties of two or three in each, were to explore every trail that offered a probability of success, and to return before nightfall to report the result of their search. War-Eagle set out, accompanied by Attō; Reginald was joined by Ethelston and Baptiste; the other parties took the respective quarters assigned to them, and Wingenund, who remained some time after they had started, left the camp alone.

The trail followed by Reginald and his friends led towards the upper part of the valley, over broken and bushy ground, intersected here and there by steamlets, and small springs, which just afforded water enough to soften the herbage, in which they were soon lost. Had he been less absorbed by the object of the expedition, Reginald could not have failed to admire the tranquil beauty of this sheltered and secluded spot; but the rich foliage of the forest trees, the merry chirrup of the birds, the fragrance exhaled by the numberless shrubs and flowers, the tempting clusters of wild

raspberries, scattered around their path, all these were passed unheeded by men whose senses and faculties were centered only on *the trail*. With equal modesty and good sense, Reginald had desired Baptiste to take the lead, knowing that the sturdy forester's experience in such matters was far greater than his own.

After they had marched a considerable distance in silence, Reginald inquired the opinion of his guide.

"Why, you see," replied the latter, "the Osages have driven their horses several times this way to feed, and their marks are plain enough; but if a man may judge by the looks of the country forward, this is not likely to be the right trail. It seems to get smaller the further we go; and I'm inclined to think it's only been a hunting-path into the woods."

After this unsatisfactory observation, Baptiste again went forward, until he stopped at the skeleton of a deer; the same, it may be remembered, as was mentioned in a former chapter. Here all traces of a further trail ceased, and the disappointed Reginald exclaimed,

"Baptiste, your suggestion was only too correct; we have lost our time; let us return, and search in some other direction."

"Not so fast, Master Reginald," replied the cautious Guide; "there's as many tricks in an

Indian's brain as there are holes in a honey-comb. The animal has been dead some time, and, unless this grass deceives me, it has been trodden within these two days. Voyons vite, as they say up north. Stand quite still; and you, too, Master Ethelston, keep on that side of the deer's bones, while I have a bit of a hunt after the wood fashion."

So saying, the Guide, resting "The Doctor" upon the skeleton, and throwing himself upon his knees, began to turn over the leaves and to examine minutely every blade of grass and fallen twig, muttering, as he pursued his task, "If War-Eagle, or one of his double-sighted Delawares were here, he would pick out this trail in no time. My eyes are not so good as they were some years back; but they will serve this purpose, however! This is only bungling work, after all: one—two;—yes, I think there's been two of them. Capote! they've strewed sticks and leaves over the back-trail!" And the rough woodsman as, creeping forward on his knees, he discovered each succeeding step on the trail, hummed snatches of an old Canadian song, the only words of which that the two friends could distinguish, being "Vogue, vogue, la bonne pirogue!"

"Has it not often been a matter of surprise to you," said Ethelston in a whisper to Reginald, "that the language, and even the dialect, of the

Guide so constantly varies? Sometimes he speaks very intelligible English; at others, his phrases and exclamations are mostly French; and, on other occasions, he mingles the two most strangely together."

"I confess," replied Reginald, "the same thought has often occurred to me; yet it is not, perhaps, so strange as it would at first sight appear, when we remember the vicissitudes of his early life, the number of years that he spent in youth among the French boatmen and traders of the northern lakes, his excursions with them into the country of the Upper Sioux and the Chippewyan nations; while for the last fifteen years he has been much employed by my father, and, from his honesty and trustworthy qualities, has been thrown a great deal into constant intercourse with persons of respectability and education."

Meanwhile, Baptiste having ascertained the direction of the trail, cast his eyes forward, and, like a shrewd reasoner, jumped to his conclusion,—in this instance, more correctly than is usually the case with the persons to whom he has been likened. Pushing aside the bushes which grew at the base of a rock, he soon observed a large aperture, closed by a stone of corresponding dimensions. This last was, with the aid of Reginald, soon displaced, and the "*câche*" of the

Osages, together with the plundered treasure it contained, was exposed to view.

"So, so!" chuckled the Guide, "we have found the thieving fox's hole;—an' they do not cover their trail somewhat better from the eyes of War-Eagle, we shall have their skins before three nights are over; why, a town lawyer could have treed this coon!"

Reginald and Ethelston could not forbear laughing at the low estimation in which the woodsman held the ferreting powers of a town lawyer,—an estimation so contrary to that entertained by those who have any experience in the capacity of a class so unjustly depreciated. They resolved to carry with them to the camp the whole contents of the cave, with a view to their being forthwith appropriated and disposed of by War-Eagle, now the chief of the tribe.

Three large blankets were easily tied into the form of so many sacks, of which each threw one over his shoulder, and they returned with their recovered spoil to the encampment.

Great was the surprise of the Delawares when they saw the three white men coming in, hot and weary with their load; greater still, when the blankets were opened, and their contents laid out upon the turf, among which were found lead, powder, cloth, knives, beads, paint, medicine-bags, and a variety of small articles, plundered from the

lodge of the unfortunate Tamenund, and those adjoining. Among these were a few books and instruments belonging to Prairie-bird and Paul Müller, all of which were immediately delivered over to the latter.

War-Eagle's party was already so well supplied with necessaries of every kind, that only a small portion of the goods was required for their use; and the chief, after permitting every man to claim anything which might have belonged to himself or his relatives, ordered the remainder to be packed in bales of convenient size, so that they might be either carried with them, or concealed, as circumstances might render advisable.

The council was opened by War-Eagle, who desired the several parties, who had been out in different directions, to state the result of the search. This was done with the brief simplicity usually observed by Indians on such occasions. But nothing of importance was elicited; for of the trails which they had examined, none seemed to be that pursued by the Osages in their retreat. During the speech of one of the Delaware warriors, Wingenund, who had not before made his appearance, noiselessly entered the circle, and, taking his place by the side of Reginald, leaned in silence upon his rifle.

Baptiste, whose age and experience entitled him to speak, and who suspected that the chief had

not been altogether unsuccessful in his search, addressed him thus:—"Has War-Eagle no word for his warriors? Grande-Hâche and Netis have found the stolen goods: has the path of the thief been dark to the eyes of the chief?"

"The foot of War-Eagle has been on the Washashe trail," was the calm reply.

A murmur of satisfaction ran through the assembly, and Reginald could scarcely restrain the open expression of his impatient joy.

"The trail is fresh," continued the chief; "not more than two dews have fallen on the prints of foot and hoof."

"Did my brother see the footmarks of Olitipa and the Comanche girl?" inquired Reginald, hastily.

"He did not; but he saw the trail of Olitipa's horse; iron is on two of its feet." *

During this conversation, Wingenund more than once looked up in the face of his white brother, then cast his eyes again upon the ground without speaking. The expression of the youth's countenance did not escape the observation of War-Eagle, who thus addressed him: "Has the young warrior of the race of Tamenund seen nothing? He has been far over the Prairie; his step was the

* It may well be supposed that the horses used by the Indians on the prairie are never shod. The palfrey of Olitipa, had probably been procured from some Mexican trader.

last to return to camp; his eyes are not shut; there are words in his breast; why are his lips silent?"

The youth modestly replied, in a voice, the singularly musical tone of which charmed and surprised Ethelston, who had seldom heard him speak before, "Wingenund waited until warriors who have seen many summers, and travelled the war-path often, should have spoken. Wingenund has been on the Washashe trail."

At this announcement an exclamation of surprise was uttered by several of the bystanders, for all had seen that the direction whence the youth had returned to the camp was quite different from that which had been pursued by War-Eagle, and yet the latter had affirmed that he had been on the trail of the enemy. The chief himself was, indeed, surprised, but he knew the diffidence, as well as the acute sagacity of the young speaker; and although confident that he was not mistaken in his own judgment, he was not by any means disposed to overrule, without careful inquiry, that of his brother. The conversation between them was thus pursued:—

"Were there horses on the trail found by Wingenund?"

"There were not."

"Were the men many in number?"

"Wingenund cannot surely say; the trail was

old and beaten; buffalo had passed on it; of fresh marks he could not see many; more than four, not so many as ten."

"Let my brother point with his finger to the line of the trail."

The youth slowly turned, cast his eye upward at the sun, thence at the rocks overhanging the valley to the northward, and then pointed steadily in a north-easterly direction.

War-Eagle, well assured that his own observation had been correct, and that he had followed a trail leading towards the north-west, thus continued: "There are many nations and bands of Indians here; a false light may have shone on the path. How does my young brother know that the feet of the Washashe had trodden it?"

There was a natural dignity, without the slightest touch of vanity, in the manner of the youth, as he replied, "The Great Spirit has given eyes to Wingenund, and he has learnt from War-Eagle to know the mocassin of a Washashe from that of a Daheotah, a Pawnee, a Shawano, or a Maha."

After musing a moment, War-Eagle continued. "Did my brother find the foot of Olitipa and the Comanche girl on the path?"

"He could not find the mark of their feet, yet he believes they are on the path," was the unhesitating reply.

Reginald and Ethelston looked at the speaker

with undisguised astonishment; and War-Eagle, although he could not believe but what the latter was mistaken, continued thus to question him : “ My brother’s speech is dark ; if he could find no trail of the women, why does he think that they are on the path ? Have the Washashe carried them ? ”

“ Not so,” replied Wingenund. “ Twice the trail crossed a soft bank of sand, where water runs from the mountains in winter ; there were the marks of two who had passed lately, their feet large as those of the warriors, the tread light as that of a woman or a young boy.”

The chief was very reluctant to say or do aught that might give pain to his young brother, whose future success as war-leader of the Lenapé had ever been the object of his fondest hopes ; but in the urgent business in which they were now engaged, he felt that all other considerations must be secondary to the recovery of Olitipa, and revenge on Mahéga for the loss and disgrace inflicted on the Lenapé.

“ My brother has eyes as sharp, and feet as light as a panther,” he said, in a kindly tone, “ but a trail in this strange country may deceive a man who has been on the war-path for twenty summers. The trail followed by War-Eagle goes through that small valley between the hills,” pointing to the north-west. “ Attō was with him ; they knew

the iron hoof of Olitipa's horse; they found this scrap, torn from her dress by a bramble stretching across the path. Is my brother satisfied?"

As the chief spoke he held up before the council a shred of a silk kerchief, such as none, certainly, except she whom they sought, was likely to have worn in that region. Again a murmur of approbation ran through the assembly; and Reginald, vexed that his young favourite should have been subjected to such a disappointment, looked towards him, in order to see whether he bore it with equanimity.

The countenance of Wingenund underwent not any change, save that a quiet smile lurked in the corner of his mouth, as he replied, "My brother and Attō are both known on the war-path; their feet are swift, and no lies are found on their lips; it must be true that they have seen the hoof-print of Olitipa's horse; it is true that the piece of dress torn off by the bramble belonged to her. Very cunning are the Washashe wolves; they have tried to blind the eyes of the Lenapé; they have made two paths; let my brother follow that which he has found, and Wingenund the other; perhaps they join beyond the mountain."

"There is sense in what the lad proposes," said Baptiste, who had listened attentively hitherto, without speaking, and who remembered the acuteness shown by Wingenund near the banks of the

Ohio. "If he is sure that he has been on the Washashe trail, 't is like enough they have divided to throw us off the scent; they will come together again further north."

Again War-Eagle mused in silence for a few minutes; then abruptly turning towards Reginald, he inquired, "What is the thought of Netis?"

"I think," replied the latter, "that Wingenund would never have spoken as he has spoken were it not that he felt assured of all that he said. I would venture my life, and what is now far dearer to me than my life, on the truth of his words."

The youth looked gratefully at the speaker, and a smile of gratified pride stole over his eloquent countenance.

"It is enough," said War-Eagle with dignity; "let Wingenund go upon his path; he shall not go alone. Which path does my brother Netis choose? he has heard all that has been said?"

Reginald was sorely puzzled: on one side was the sagacious experience of the chief, added to the strong evidence afforded by the shred of silk; on the other, the confident assurance of a youth, of whose diffidence and acuteness he had seen so many proofs. While he was still hesitating, he saw the eyes of the latter fixed upon him with an earnest, imploring expression, that decided him at once.

"I will go with my young brother," he said

firmly; “Grand-Hâche, Ethelston, and six men shall go with us; War-Eagle, with the rest of the party, shall go on the large Washashe trail that he has struck. Let the chief say how we shall meet beyond the mountain if either of the trails prove false.”

“It is good,” said War-Eagle; “Attō shall lead the warriors who go with my white brother, and before the third sun rises we will come together again and talk of what we have seen.”

Having thus spoken, the chief waved his hand to intimate that the council was dissolved; and calling Wingenund and Attō aside, he gave them clear and rapid instructions as to the course to be pursued in case of the trails diverging to opposite quarters, and he established at the same time various signals, to be used in case of necessity.

Pierre and M. Perrot asked and obtained leave to join Reginald’s party; most of the horses and all the spare baggage followed that of War-Eagle, who led them off through the defile in the mountains before alluded to, while Wingenund led the way to the trail which he had discovered, with the light springy step of an antelope, and an expression of bright confidence on his countenance, which communicated a similar feeling to those who might otherwise have been disinclined to trust themselves to the guidance of a youth on his first war-path.

While these things were passing in the allied camp, the Osage named Toweno, who had, it may be remembered, been sent forward by Mahéga to reconnoitre, returned on the following morning to his chief, bringing him intelligence that the fires seen at a distance were those of a numerous band of Upsarokas; he had crept near enough to recognise them as such by their dress, the trappings of their horses, and other indications not to be mistaken. On receiving this information Mahéga revolved in his mind various plans for gaining the good will of his dangerous neighbours, and of securing their alliance as a protection against any further hostilities that might yet be attempted by those in pursuit of his trail. As he had often before profited by the shrewd advice of his follower, so did he invite him now to give his opinion as to the best course to be adopted; and in order that the discussion might not be overheard, he walked slowly with Toweno down a glade which led towards the Crow camp.

They had not proceeded far, when they saw a fine bison-cow coming directly towards them; from her languid and crippled movement, it was evident that she was wounded; while from her struggles to get forward, it was equally clear that she was pursued. The Osages lost not a moment in crouching below the cover of a thick bush; and scarcely had they done so when a mounted Indian ap-

peared, urging his tired horse up the glade after the wounded cow. It happened that she fell, unable to proceed further, not many yards from the spot where Mahéga was concealed; and her pursuer slackening his pace, approached leisurely; and having shot another arrow into her side, dispatched her with the long knife which hung at his belt.

He was a tall, fine-looking man, in the prime of life, with remarkably high cheek bones, an aquiline nose, and a mass of long hair gathered or clubbed at the back of his head; his hunting-shirt and leggings denoted by their ornaments a warrior of rank in his tribe, and his whole appearance and bearing were indicative of habitual authority.

The little steed which had borne him, and which in truth would have been termed among white men a pony, stood panting beside its master, whose weight seemed entirely disproportioned to its size and strength; and the Crow hunter now stooped over the bison-cow, examining her condition and her fat with the attention of a practised Indian gourmand.

Meanwhile, half a minute sufficed for Mahéga to explain his intentions in a whisper to his follower, and less than half a minute sufficed to carry them into execution. Rushing together upon the Crow while he was stooping with his back towards them, they seized and pinioned him before he had

time to catch up his knife or to offer the least resistance. Never was there an attack more unexpected, nor a victory more easily obtained; and the discomfited Crow looked upon his two captors with an astonishment that he could not conceal. Their dress and tribe were altogether strange to him; and the scouts around the camp having brought in no report of any suspicious appearance or trail having been discovered, it could not be wondered at if he imagined that they must have pounced upon him from the clouds.

As soon as Mahéga had assured himself that the hands of the prisoner were securely tied, he led him towards a spot more sheltered from observation, Toweno following with the horse; and if the Crow felt at first any uneasiness respecting their intentions towards him, it must have been soon dispelled, as the Osage chief assured him, in the language of signs, that no harm was intended to him, and that he would soon be at liberty.

After a short consultation with Toweno, the chief determined to conduct the prisoner to his camp, on reaching which his arms were unbound, and he was courteously invited to take a seat by his captors. The Crow obeyed without any apparent reluctance, having satisfied himself by a hasty glance around that he was watched by several well-armed men, and that any attempt at escape or resistance, must be for the present hopeless of success.

The pipe of peace having been smoked between the Osage and his prisoner, some meat and cakes were placed before the latter, of which he partook without hesitation ; but he could not resist casting sundry curious glances at the white tent, wondering what it might contain ; he observed also the numerous packs and bales scattered around, and thought within himself that, whatever might be his own fate, many of these would ere long fall into the hands of his tribe.

As soon as he had finished his meal, Mahéga, resumed the conversation in the language of signs, explained to him that he wished to become friends with the Upsaroka ; that he had come from very far with few followers, having fought with the Pale-Faces ; that the tent was Great Medicine, and contained that which brought wealth and good things to friends, but terror and misfortunes to enemies.

It may be supposed that the Upsaroka did not, in his present circumstances, regret these peaceful overtures ; on the contrary, he bound himself by the most solemn promises to do everything in his power towards establishing friendship between their respective tribes, and he gave Mahéga to understand by his gestures that he was not without authority among the Crows.*

* Among some of the North American tribes it is the custom for an Indian entering into a solemn obligation, to place

Upon receiving this assurance, the Osage chief suffered his prisoner to depart, restoring to him his horse, and presenting him with several trinkets in token of friendship.

The first use which the latter made of his recovered liberty, was to invite Mahéga to return with him to the Upsaroka village, an invitation which, to the surprise of his followers, he accepted without hesitation.

With a parting caution to Toweno to keep his men watchful and ready against a surprise, he threw a battle-robe* over his broad shoulders, and, armed

his hand against the thigh of the party to whom he makes the promise ; and this usage has in several instances been triumphantly quoted by those authors who have laboured to prove the descent of the North-American Indians from the lost tribes of Israel : the origin and meaning of the custom, which is as ancient as the time of Abraham, (Gen. xxiv. 2,) are both involved in great obscurity ; sundry explanations have been attempted by learned commentators of different ages and nations ; the Jewish writings of the highest authority, such as the Targum of Jerusalem, and that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, derive it from the covenant of Circumcision, to which they maintain its symbolic analogy by arguments which it is unnecessary here to produce. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, leans to this view, but does not offer any conclusive reasoning in support of it. Bishop Patrick, following the learned Calmet, describes this usage as an ancient sign of subjection and homage prevalent throughout the East ; and Locke mentions it as being “practised by some Indians to this day.”

* It is a frequent custom among the Missouri Indians to sketch upon the interior of a bison-robe the various battles in which they have fought and conquered.

with his rifle, tomahawk, and knife, accompanied his new ally towards the Crow village.

On approaching it he found that it consisted of more than a hundred lodges, containing, probably, two hundred men, besides women and children.

Great was their surprise when they saw the gigantic stranger advancing with his conductor towards the lodge of the principal chief, to whom he was nearly related.

The mien and bearing of the Osage, as he entered the lodge, were alone sufficient to secure for him a courteous invitation to sit in the place of honour, while the Crow who had been his prisoner briefly narrated to the head chief the circumstances under which the stranger visited his camp.

The pipe of friendship having been smoked in due form, the Crow chief whispered a few words in the ear of a youth beside him, who disappeared immediately, and the party sat in silence until he returned, accompanied by an individual whose appearance was singular in the extreme; his head was of an enormous size, and covered with black shaggy hair; his features were coarse and forbidding, nor was their expression improved by a patch of leather plastered over the cavity which had once been occupied by his left eye; his shoulders were broad, and his arms of unusual length, his stature was scarcely five feet, and his legs were bandy, with clumsy knees like those of a buffalo-bull; this un-

sightly ogre rejoiced in the name of Besha-ro-Kata, signifying in the Crow language, “the little bison,” but he was commonly called “Besha,” or the “Bison,” the diminutive termination being omitted.

His origin was involved in a mystery that neither he nor any one else could satisfactorily explain, for he had been born in that wild region watered by the Arkansas, and his mother, a Comanche woman, was said to have divided her favours, previous to the birth of Besha, between a half-bred trader to Santa Fé, and a runaway negro from one of the southern slave-states; she died while he was yet an infant, and as he had never been owned or claimed by either of his reputed fathers, it was a miracle that he ever lived to manhood.

In his early years, he hovered about the hunting parties of Osages, Comanches, Pani-picas, and other tribes, who frequented the region where he had been left to shift for himself, and at other seasons none knew whether he lived upon roots, berries, and honey, or wandered to tribes yet more remote from his birth-place. He was never known, either in summer or winter, to wear any other dress than a bison-skin with the hair outwards, in the centre of which he cut a hole, and passing his head through the aperture, wore this uncouth skin like the Poncha of the Mexicans. From these early rambling habits, he had picked up a

smattering of many Indian dialects, and of these the Osage was one with which he was the most familiar; he enjoyed a high reputation among the Crows, not only from his being often useful as an interpreter, but because he was, without exception, the most skilful horse-stealer in the whole region between the Arkansas and the mountains. He was also deeply versed in the knowledge of all the properties of plants, roots, and herbs, so much so that, unless fame wronged him, more than one of his enemies had died by the agency of subtle poison. Such was the personage, who fixing his single cunning eye upon Mahéga, inquired, on the part of the Crows, his object in paying them a visit. The conversation, rendered into English, was in substance as follows :

Besha. “ Has the Washashe come to hunt and trap among the Stony Mountains ? ”

Mahéga. “ He has not ; he has come towards the setting sun because the enemies on his path were too many for him—he wished for peace.”

B. “ Has the Washashe a name in his tribe ? ”

M. “ He has a name ; when the war-post is struck, Mahéga is not silent,” said the chief, haughtily.

B. “ Mahéga ! ” repeated the horse-stealer, to whom the name was evidently not unknown. “ Mahéga, the Red-hand !—does he wander so far from his village ? ”

M. "He wanders, but there is Great Medicine in his lodge; blood has been on his path, and his enemies do not laugh."

B. "Who are the men with whom Mahéga has dug up the hatchet?"

M. "Pale-faces, and cowardly Red-skins, who are their friends."

When this reply was translated, a great sensation was visible among the Crows, several of whom whispered together. After receiving a few instructions from the Chief, Besha proceeded with his inquiry.

"Are the Pale-faces on the trail of Mahéga?"

M. "They are."

B. "How many?"

M. "Mahéga does not know."

B. "Is there a pale-faced warrior with them, young, and tall, riding a dark horse, very swift and strong?"

M. "There is," said the Osage, astonished in his turn at hearing Reginald thus accurately described by the interpreter.

Again there was a murmur, and consultation among the Crows, after which Besha thus proceeded :

"What is the wish of Mahéga? the Upsaroka ears are open."

M. "He wishes to make friends with them, to join his strength to theirs, to drive these Pale-

face thieves out of the Crow country. Mahéga's warriors are few, but they are not squaws; his hands are not empty; he has presents for the chiefs, and he will not forget the interpreter." He added, sinking his voice almost to a whisper: "He has many things, enough to make the tribe rich, hid in a cave far to the south; if the Crow will be his brother, he shall find that Mahéga has an open hand."

The cunning chief was aware of the thieving propensities of the Upsaroka, and he purposely threw out this last hint that they might be induced to spare his baggage, in the hope of ultimately possessing themselves of the more important treasure in his "*câche*." Nor was his stratagem without effect, for the discovery and possession of the contents of that *câche* became forthwith the principal object of the Crow chief; and the readiest mode of attaining it was to make friends with the party who could alone guide him to it.

Fortune had in this instance been more propitious to Mahéga than he deserved, for, as the reader has probably conjectured, he had fallen in with that very Upsaroka band, a detachment of which had been so roughly handled a few days before by Reginald Brandon and the Delawares under his command.

The high contracting parties being thus united by the strong ties of avarice, and revenge against a

common enemy, an offensive and defensive alliance was entered into immediately. Mahéga soon discovered the motive which impelled his new friends so strongly to espouse his cause, and was thereby satisfied that, for the present at least, he might trust them. Before nightfall, the white tent of Prairie-bird was pitched at the edge of the Upsaroka camp, and the Osages took up their quarters around it, so that none could leave or enter it unperceived by them.

Early on the following morning Mahéga received a visit from the Crow chief, who, accompanied by Besha, came ostensibly to show him courtesy, but in reality to inspect his packages, horses, men, and equipments; and, if possible, to solve the mystery of the Great Medicine in the white tent. The Osage warriors, strong, weather-beaten men, every one provided with a rifle in addition to the usual arms of an Indian, had no reason to fear the scrutinizing eye of the Crow; indeed, the latter began already to calculate how he might best avail himself of their aid in an expedition which he meditated against his hereditary enemies, the Black-Feet.

After the pipe had been smoked, and food set before his guests, Mahéga desired one of the smaller packages to be opened, from which he selected a blanket, and spreading upon it various beads and trinkets, presented the whole, in token

of friendship, to the Upsaroka chief, who seemed highly delighted with the gift.

His expressions of gratitude, conveyed through Besha, were unbounded. He did not, however, think it requisite to express, at the same time, his vehement desire to become the possessor of all the goods and chattels belonging to the Osage; neither did the latter forget to propitiate the interpreter, whom he presented with a knife, and ornamented sheath, both of which were graciously accepted.

The Crow was resolved not to leave the spot until he had solved the enigma of the mysterious tent; and finding that his guest still kept silence on the subject, he directed Besha to use his best exertions towards the gratification of his curiosity. An opportunity being afforded by the appearance of Lita, who went out to draw some water from the stream, the interpreter inquired whether that woman was the “Great Medicine,” of which he had spoken.

Mahéga, who was desirous of impressing the Crows with a due respect for Prairie-bird, shook his head, replying, “That is the slave of the Great Medicine.”

Besha. “Is the Great Medicine a chief—a wise man?”

Mahéga. “No: it is in the form of a woman;

but its power is very great. It talks with the Great Spirit, and the Wahconda* listens to its speech!"

Besha. "Many are the medicine-men who talk with the Great Spirit; they see dreams, and give counsel to the warriors and chiefs; there is no new Medicine here."

"My brother speaks truth," said the Osage, smiling scornfully. "But if the medicine-men of the Upsaroka call to the sun, will he come out of his path, or hide his face at their words?"

Having thus spoken, Mahéga lowered his voice, as if afraid of being overheard by the mysterious tenant of the tent, and related to the wondering Besha the circumstances attending the late eclipse.

The interpreter having given the explanation to his chief, they looked at each other in speechless astonishment; for not only was there an air of truth in the statement of Mahéga, but the Crows having themselves observed the mystery of the darkened sun, were thereby led to listen with believing awe to the wonderful disclosure made by the Osage.

Perceiving his advantage, the latter again re-

* As the Great Spirit is designated by the Delawares, Chipeways, Sâkis, and other tribes on this side of the Mississippi by the name of "Manittó," or "Manitou," familiar to every reader of Transatlantic travel or romance, so is he known among the Osages, Omahaws, Ioways, and other Missouri tribes, by the designation of Wah-con-da, or "Master of Life."

lapsed into silence, which was broken, after a few minutes, by the interpreter, who inquired, on the part of his chief, whether the Great Medicine of the tent would receive a present from him. To this the cautious Osage replied, that the daughter of the Unknown cared not for the things belonging to other women; but that her smile and her good words would bring prosperity to those with whom she dwelt, while her curse would ensure their destruction; on which account it would not do any harm if the Upsaroka were to offer a present to her Medicine.

The latter now finding that, during this visit at least, his curiosity would not be gratified by a sight of the mysterious dweller in the tent, arose and took a courteous leave of the Osage chief, who remained for some time ruminating abstractedly over his future plans, and the probability of their ultimate success.

Scarcely half an hour had elapsed ere Besha returned, accompanied by two young Indians, one of whom led a wild horse, which he presented on the part of his chief to Mahéga; and the other was the bearer of a large package of beaver-skins of the finest quality, which he laid down at the door of the tent, and retired, casting back uneasy glances, apparently relieved at having safely executed a commission fraught with danger.

Mahéga presented each of the youths with a

handsome knife, and Besha with a mirror, wherein he contemplated his cyclopean countenance with undisguised satisfaction; so long, indeed, did he continue this admiring self-inspection, that the two young Crows left him engaged in it, and returned to their quarters.

They had not been long gone before the interpreter commenced a confidential conversation with the Osage chief, during which each endeavoured, with little success on either side, to overreach the other; at the same time, the conference was not without its satisfactory issue to both parties; for Mahéga ascertained that the Crows viewed the mixed band of Whites and Delawares with feelings as hostile as his own, and that they were as deeply impressed as he could desire with awe for the mysterious powers of Prairie-bird. On the other hand, Besha satisfied himself that his own services would be almost indispensable to the Osage, and that the latter was neither unwilling nor unable to reward them liberally; so that after a complimentary conversation of some length, these two rogues parted, with many expressions of mutual regard and esteem.

Scarcely was the interpreter out of sight, when Mahéga sprung from the ground to examine more closely the steed presented to him by the Crow chief. It was a strong, high-mettled bay colt, untamed, and almost untameable; if the truth

must be told, the latter had given it to his guest because neither he nor any of his warriors could subdue its violent and vicious spirit, although the Crows are renowned among the Indian nations as bold and expert horsemen.

On whatever side Mahéga endeavoured to approach to mount it, the horse struck fiercely at him, using both hind and fore feet with equal rapidity; but the Osage, penetrating at once the motives of the Crow's liberality, smiled in disdain of the shallow trick, and, seizing his opportunity, threw himself upon the wild, unsaddled animal, despite of whose furious plunging and resistance, he sat unmoved like a centaur; and plying his whip and heel with unmitigated severity, compelled it to gallop at full speed over the prairie, until he thought fit to bring it back to the camp, wearied, breathless, and subdued. Then throwing the halter to one of his men, he quietly resumed his pipe, leaving the Crow chief and his people to draw their own conclusions from what they had seen.

CHAPTER II.

CONTAINING VARIOUS INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED TO THE PARTY FOLLOWING THE TRAIL.—PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS, AND A DISCUSSION UPON ORATORY, WHICH IS VERY MUCH OUT OF PLACE, AND, FORTUNATELY FOR THE READER, IS NOT VERY LONG.

THERE is scarcely any position or occasion in life more gratifying to a young and generous spirit, than when it finds itself, for the first time, entrusted with a high responsibility. The elastic mind, far from succumbing under the unwonted burden, springs upward with increased vigour to resist its pressure; and the trials and difficulties which threaten to overwhelm it, only serve to call forth and multiply its energies. Such was the case with Wingenund, who now found himself, although not yet seventeen years of age, leading a gallant band on a trail,—a task which is at all times the greatest trial of an Indian warrior's skill; and, if successful, lays the foundation of his fame. The issue at stake was, in this instance, heightened by the importance of the object to be attained, and by the remarkable circumstance

that he had ventured to differ from, and overrule, the opinion of his elder brother, the most sagacious warrior of the tribe.

Fully impressed with the serious responsibility that he had incurred, the youth set forth upon the trail with a gravity of demeanour which contrasted strongly with his almost boyish years. Yet, while his keen eye darted from point to point, suffering not a blade of grass to escape its scrutiny, his countenance wore a beaming look of confidence, that imparted its cheering influence to the whole party.

For some hours he marched rapidly forward, with the assured step of a man who was treading a familiar path. Attō followed at no great distance, next to whom, on the trail, came Reginald, with Ethelston, Baptiste, and the other Whites, the line being closed by the Delawares, who brought up the rear. It may easily be imagined that Reginald bent his eyes anxiously on the path; but although frequent traces were discernible of the passage of men, as well as of various animals, he could not discover the slightest indication of the marks for which he looked; neither did the observation of the more experienced Baptiste meet with any better success.

When Wingenund reached the streamlet, on the sandy edge of which he had before noticed the light tread of a foot, which in spite of its dimen-

sion, he believed to be that of Prairie-bird or her attendant, he halted the party, and summoned Attō to a close examination of the trail. Stooping over it, the Indian looked long and earnestly, after which he shook his head, as if dissatisfied, and muttered a few words, the meaning of which Baptiste was not near enough to catch. Wingenund made no reply, and crossing the brook, resumed the trail on its opposite bank.

“Does Attō find the mark of women’s feet on the sand?” inquired Baptiste.

“He is not sure; bison have passed over the marks, and trodden them,” was the evasive reply, and the party proceeded on the track.

Nothing of any importance occurred for some time to enliven the tedium of the march. The sanguine hopes of Reginald had been checked by what had fallen from Attō, of whose acuteness he justly entertained a high opinion. Ethelston seemed buried in deep reflection; and even the comic sallies of Monsieur Perrot failed to excite any mirth in those to whom they were addressed.

“Ethelston, I fear that I acted imprudently,” said his friend, in a low voice, “when I preferred the counsel of this youth to the more experienced opinion of War-Eagle; yet there was something in his manner that I could not resist.”

“Doubtless,” replied Éthelston, “the counsel of the elder warrior was entitled to the greater

weight ; and yet I do not think that he would himself have placed this detachment under the guidance of Wingenund, unless he felt sure that the latter had strong grounds for the tenacity with which he clung to his opinion."

"I would willingly peril my life on his truth and fidelity," said Reginald. "The question is, whether on this occasion he may not have been led into some error by the very eagerness of his wishes, and the ardour of his temperament."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when Wingenund stooped to pick up a small object which his quick eye had caught beside the trail ; in another minute he placed it in the hand of Reginald, while a triumphant smile lit up his animated features. The object referred to was a slip of folded paper, damp with the dew which had fallen upon it. Reginald opened its folds, then gazed upon it in silence, with a fixed look, like one in a trance, while his powerful frame trembled from head to foot. The paroxysm of excitement lasted but for a moment, then putting the slip of paper into the hand of Ethelston, he threw himself into the arms of Wingenund ; and if a tear escaped him, it fell unseen upon the bosom which he pressed with grateful affection to his heart.

Meanwhile Ethelston made himself master of the secret which had produced an effect so sudden, as to cause the greatest astonishment in the whole

party, now gathered round to ascertain what had happened. He had read on the slip the magical word “Follow,” written in a distinct legible hand, and every doubt as to the Prairie-bird having passed along the trail vanished in an instant. This was no sooner made known to the hunters, and by Baptiste to the Delawares, than a shout of triumph from the whole party roused Reginald from the momentary weakness into which he had been betrayed.

“Follow thee!” he exclaimed, aloud, holding the paper in his left hand, and grasping a rifle in his right; “Follow thee, dearest one! yes, over prairie and mountain, through valley and river, in cold or in heat, in hunger or thirst, there are those here who will never cease to follow thee, until thou art set free, and the injuries done to thyself and thy kindred dearly avenged!”

Again a shout of sympathetic enthusiasm broke from the party, as they caught the words of their leader, and read on his glowing countenance the intense ardour of feelings, too strong to be repressed.

What must have been, in the meantime, the sensations of the Delaware youth? The affectionate yearnings of his heart towards his adopted brother, his deep anxiety for his sister’s fate, his future fame as the rising war-chief of his tribe, all these combined together to swell the triumph of

the hour ; yet there was not visible in his features the slightest appearance of gratified pride or vanity ; and if his dark eye beamed with a brighter lustre, it was not so much with self-congratulation at what he had done, as with high aspirations for the glorious task before him.

Ethelston, who had watched him closely, was surprised at his calm, unmoved demeanour, and whispered to Baptiste, “ Wingenund evinces little anxiety or emotion on this occasion ; and yet this undoubted token which he has found on the trail must be a great triumph to him, after the doubts expressed by so many warriors of greater experience.”

“ It’s partly the natur’, and partly the trainin’ of the boy,” replied the Guide, leaning on his long rifle ; “ the stronger his feelings the less will he show ’em to another man. I reckon this has been one of the proudest moments in his life, yet, as you say, he looks almost as if he’d nothin’ to do with the matter ; and he’d look the same if the Osages were pinchin’ his flesh with hot tongs. Wingenund is three years older now than he was last month !”

“ You are right, Baptiste,” replied Ethelston : “ it is not days, nor weeks, nor months, but rough trials, brave deeds, and deep feelings that make up the calendar of human life.”

So saying, he sighed, and musingly resumed his

place in the line of march, remembering in how short a space of time Nina's unrequited love had, while she was still younger than the lad of whom he was speaking, consigned her, wasted and heart-broken, to the grave.

Again Wingenund moved swiftly forward on the trail, and the whole party followed, their hopes excited, and their spirits raised by the occurrence above related. Reginald walked silently on, still clasping in his hand the magic token which had conjured up hopes and thoughts too deep for utterance. From time to time his lips unconsciously murmured "Follow!" and then the idea shot like fire through his brain, that all his power to obey the dear behest hung upon the sagacity of the youth who was now tracing the steps of an enemy, skilled in all the wiles of Indian warfare, and whose object it clearly was to baffle pursuit.

Before the close of day the watchful perseverance of Wingenund was again rewarded by finding another of the slips of paper dropped by Prairie-bird, which he brought, as before, to Reginald. The magic "Follow" again met his longing eyes; and as he announced it to the rest of the party, a joyful anticipation of success pervaded every breast.

After a brief consultation with Attō, Wingenund now resolved to halt for the night, as the increasing darkness rendered it impossible any longer

to distinguish the trail with accuracy; so the horses were picketed, the succession of sentries arranged, and the party bivouacked under the shelter of two enormous pines, where the preparations for a substantial supper were soon completed, Monsieur Perrot taking charge of that destined for Reginald and Ethelston, while Bearskin and the other hunters prepared a meal for themselves and the Delawares apart. Wingenund was about to join the latter party; but at the earnest request of the two friends, he placed himself beside them, Baptiste being invited to sit down with them also.

It may be imagined that the conversation turned chiefly upon the all-engrossing subject of the pursuit in which they were engaged; and Ethelston was struck by the change which he observed in the demeanour of Wingenund; for the latter had now put off the gravity and somewhat haughty bearing of the aspiring warrior, and had resumed the playful and touching simplicity of manner that was natural to his years, and accorded equally well with the almost feminine delicacy of his features and the soft melody of his voice. He took no pains to conceal the pleasure with which he received the warm and sincere encomium that Reginald passed upon the patience and sagacity that he had displayed in his arduous task.

“Netis owes me no thanks,” he said, smiling. “Love for my sister and revenge on the Wash-

ashees, who like cowards and false friends slew my kindred,—these lead me on the trail."

"It is not your eagerness, nor the strength of your motives that I call in question, dear Wing-nund; but I am surprised that you are able to follow so slight a trail without being deceived by the tricks and devices of the Osage."

"The Black Father has often told me that among the southern men there are dogs who can follow the foot of a man by day or night, and will never leave the scent till they seize him. If an antelope is wounded, the wolf will hunt the track of her blood on the prairie till he finds her; if a bison is killed, turkey-buzzards, many in number, fly from far to the carcase, though there is no trail in the air for them to follow. Is it wonderful that the Great Spirit should bestow on the son of his ancient people a gift enjoyed by these beasts and fowls?"

"What you say is true," replied Reginald, "yet certainly we who live in settlements have not these faculties; at least we have them in a very inferior degree."

"The wise men of our nation have always said that the eyes and ears of white men are not good; but the Black Father says that their speech is not true, for that the Great Spirit has made the ears and eyes of red and white men alike, only the Pale-faces do not improve them as we do by use."

"Your Black Father may say what he likes," interposed Baptiste, "but I maintain that the ears of a white man are no more like the ears of a real Ingian than the paws of a bear are like the legs of an antelope. I remember, though it's now some twenty years ago, I was out on a hunt in the North with a Delaware comrade; he was called in the tribe 'The-man-who-hears-from-far';—to say truth, I thought he often pretended to hear things that never happened, only just to keep up his name. We had walked all the morning, and having killed an elk, sat down to cook it on the prairie. All at once he held up his finger for me to keep silence; and turning his head to listen, his countenance changed, and his ear pricked up like that of a scared doe. Nay, Master Reginald, you need not smile, for it's as true as a gun-barrel; and said I, 'What's the matter now?' He made no answer, but went a little way off; and lying down, put the side of his head to the ground. He soon returned, and told me that a 'big canoe was coming over the lake.'—'What,' said I, 'over that lake we passed this morning beyond those high woods?'—'Yes,' he replied, 'the same; I hear the paddles dip in the water.' I laughed in his face, and told him he was dreaming; for the lake was, maybe, two miles off; but he declared that he had heard the paddles as plain as he now heard my voice. I tried to listen, but

could not hear a sound; however, I knew that if he was right, the canoe would be full of enemies, seein' that we had no particular friends then in the Dahcotah country, and I thought it better to believe him for once; so we put more sticks on the fire, to make as great a smoke as we could, and then ran off to the top of a hill, where a big pine-tree grew; and as it was about half way between the fire and the lake, we clomb in among its branches, where we could have a good look-out on both. We remained some time without hearing or seeing anything; and I began to conceive that my comrade had made a fool of me, as well as of himself, when we saw five or six Sioux devils peep out of the brush at the edge of the prairie, where they pointed to the smoke that rose from our fire, and began to creep cautiously towards it."

At this point the narrative of the Guide was unexpectedly interrupted by a sharp cry uttered by Monsieur Perrot, who jumped up from his seat, and capered like a harlequin, making at the same time the most doleful grimaces and ejaculations. Wingenund was the first to perceive and to explain to Reginald the cause of the unfortunate valet's distress, in doing which he laughed with such hearty inexpressible mirth, that the tears started from his eyes.

It appeared that Monsieur Perrot, in his anxiety to hear Baptiste's adventure, had unconsciously

edged himself nearer and nearer to the fire, by the side of which was a small pile of dry burrs and prickly adhesive twigs; while sitting upon these, and listening intently to the narrative, they had become accidentally ignited, and not only burnt him as he sat, but adhered to his nether garments when he jumped up, where they continued to crackle and smoke in spite of the efforts which he made to disengage himself from them. To add to his terror, he remembered at this critical juncture that there was a powder-flask in the hinder pocket of his jacket; a circumstance which he communicated to his master with renewed exclamations, and unavailing attempts to rid himself of the dangerous magazine. On hearing this, Ethelston emptied a vessel full of water over a blanket that lay beside him, in which he immediately enveloped the alarmed valet, and by this ready application of one element freed him from the more serious danger to be apprehended from the other.

As soon as the gravity of the party was in some degree restored, Reginald requested the Guide to conclude the narrative which had been so unexpectedly interrupted, expressing at the same time his curiosity to learn how Baptiste and his comrade had extricated themselves from their unpleasant position among the branches of the pine-tree.

"Why, you see, Master Reginald, as soon as they were fairly busied in making their way to the

fire which we had left burning, we slipped down the tree, and struck into the wood, where we had no difficulty in finding their back-trail to the lake, and creeping cautiously towards the shore, we found that the hot-headed fools had left no one to watch their canoe, which we spied under the boughs of an alder that hung over the lake; so we just stuck a piece of stick in the ground, with a Delaware mark on it to vex' em on their return, when we paddled away to the other side; and having bored two holes in the canoe, and broken the paddles, we went on our way; and since that time I've always held my own opinion about an Indian's ears, and I'm not likely to change it now."

Whether the Guide's story was tedious, or that the fatigues of the day had produced their effects upon his hearers, certain it is, that soon after its conclusion both the ears and eyes of the greater portion were closed in sleep, and nothing having occurred during the night to alarm those who had watched, the whole party set forward as soon as daylight broke on the following morning.

Wingenund had no difficulty in making out the trail until he reached the banks of the river, in crossing which Mahéga had taken so much pains to mislead his pursuers. Here the youth halted, and informed Reginald that he might look for game during the remainder of the day, as it would

be necessary for him and Attō to search for War-Eagle's party, and with them to find the right trail on the opposite bank.

The two Delawares started at a rapid pace to the westward, bestowing as they went careful attention on the various tracks of bison and other animals which had crossed at the different fords that they passed. After a toilsome march of some hours, they fell in with War-Eagle's party, whom they found occupied in a like investigation. The chief learnt his young brother's success with undisguised pleasure; his nature was too noble to entertain a thought of jealousy; and one of the first wishes of his heart was to see Wingenund take his place among the first warriors of the tribe. He had ascertained beyond a doubt, that although the horses of the Osages had crossed the river opposite to the trail which he had been following, they had not travelled far in that direction, but had returned to the bed of the river for the obvious purpose of baffling pursuit; and the Delawares now crossed to the northern bank, and after minute examination of every path and track which led from it, they arrived in the evening at the point from whence Wingenund started, confident that the right trail must, if the Osages had crossed at all, be at some spot lower down the stream.

The whole party, now again reunited, encamped for the night, and related, over their evening meal,

the indications and tracks which they had remarked on their respective lines of march. At the earliest dawn War-Eagle was again afoot, and after an hour's patient search, he struck a trail, which he pronounced, without hesitation, to be that of the Osages. As it led through a wooded and hilly region along the base of the Great Mountains, abounding in narrow and dangerous passes, every precaution was used against ambush or surprise; War-Eagle, Wingenund, and Attō leading the advance, with several of the most swift and skilful of their warriors, and the white men, who brought up the rear, being cautioned against straggling or falling behind the main body.

Another slip of paper found upon the trail, bearing Prairie-bird's inspiring watchword "Follow," raised the spirits of the party to the highest pitch. They halted at midday to refresh themselves and their horses for an hour, under the shade of some spreading cedars, above which rose a high conical peak, on the sides of which were scattered a few dwarf oaks and other timber of stunted growth. Obeying a signal from War-Eagle, Reginald climbed with him to the summit of this hill, whence they could command an extensive view of the sand-hills and undulating ocean of prairie to the eastward, while above them to the westward towered the lofty and still distant mountain-tops, clad in their bright mantle of eternal snow.

But it was not to enjoy the splendour of this magnificent prospect that the Delaware had toiled up this steep ascent, or that he now cast his restless and searching eye towards the north and east horizon: he had another object in view. Neither did he seem to have altogether failed in its attainment, for after gazing long and intently upon a spot to the northward, his countenance brightened, and he desired Reginald, who was unable to distinguish so distant a speck with the naked eye, to examine it carefully with his telescope, for that he would see something there that would make his heart beat.

Reginald did so, and having succeeded in catching the indicated object with his glass, he exclaimed, "War-Eagle, my brother, you are right, I can see them plainly, one—two—three—aye, twenty Indian lodges, and *the white tent* among them. Heaven be praised for all its mercies, we shall save her yet!"

For a few moments the chief was silent, then he said, "Let my brother use the glass again, and say how many lodges he can count."

"There seem to be very many," said Reginald, after a careful survey, "more than fifty, but I cannot count them, for the tent is on a small hill, and some may be hid behind it."

"Mahéga smokes the pipe with a powerful tribe," said the Delaware, musing; and the two friends descended the hill, each contemplating ac-

cording to the bent of their respective characters, the difficulties yet to be encountered, and the means by which those difficulties might be overcome.

Meanwhile it must not be supposed that Mahéga remained in idle security a resident in the Crow encampment; he appreciated too justly the skill and perseverance of War-Eagle to suppose that the latter would not strike and follow his trail, he therefore turned his attention to the strengthening of his alliance with his new friends by every means in his power. In this endeavour his own sagacity was admirably, though perhaps unconsciously, seconded by the winning manners and character of Prairie-bird, for the Crows, who had been prepared to look upon her with a feeling akin to dread, were agreeably surprised by her extreme beauty, and the gentleness of her demeanour.

The cunning Osage, knowing that she could only be drawn from the strict seclusion in which she lived by her never-failing willingness to alleviate suffering, had caused several children, and others afflicted with illness, to be brought to her, and she never declined giving them such remedies from her remaining stock of medicine as she thought most likely to afford relief. The general success of her simple pharmacy fully answered the expectations of Mahéga, in the increasing anxiety daily evinced by the Crows to guard and protect

the “Great Medicine” of the tent; and thus, while obeying the dictates of her own gentle and humane feeling, the maiden little knew that she was strengthening the cords of her captivity.

Neither did Mahéga neglect to take every precaution against an attack or surprise on the part of War-Eagle and his party. Although ignorant of their precise force, he knew that they would in all probability be well-armed, and was far from satisfied with the position of the present encampment occupied by the Crows.

After conversing once or twice with Besha, and the judicious admixture of a few presents to that disinterested personage, he learnt that there was at a distance of half a day’s march to the northward a favourite stronghold of the Crows, to which they frequently resorted when attacked by an enemy too numerous to be resisted in the open plain, and it was represented to be in a neighbourhood affording abundance of game, and a plentiful supply of pasture for the horses.

Mahéga found it not a very difficult task to persuade the Crow chief to withdraw to this post, representing to him the formidable equipment of the Delawares aided by their white allies, and he urged him also to send a few of his best runners to hang about the trail by which he had himself arrived, so that timely notice of the enemy’s approach might be received.

The Crow acquiesced in both suggestions, and the united band moved off accordingly to the post above referred to, which they reached in the afternoon of the same day; it was a conical hill, covered on one side with low juniper bushes, and rising suddenly out of the prairie at a distance of several miles from the higher range of mountains to the west; a few hundred yards further to the east was another height of similar elevation, but of less circumference, and between these two lay a valley of extreme fertility, watered by a stream so cool and clear, that it bespoke at once the mountain source whence it flowed; the eastern side of this second hill was almost perpendicular, so as to be secure against any attack from that quarter: while an enemy approaching from the valley would be exposed to missiles shot from either height.

Mahéga saw at a glance the strength of the position, and proposed to the chief that he, with his Osages, should garrison the smaller height, leaving the larger hill and the intermediate valley to be occupied by the Crows.

This arrangement being agreed upon, the tent of Prairie-bird was pitched near the summit, on a spot where the ground gently sloped to the westward, and a few scattered oaks, cedars, and pines afforded not only a partial shelter from the rays of the sun, but a sufficient supply of fuel for cooking the venison and bison meat, which the

hunters had brought in abundantly. Some twenty lodges of the Crows were placed upon the opposite and larger height; these consisted chiefly of the principal braves and warriors; the intermediate valley being occupied by the remainder of the band, and an ample space was left for picketing the horses at night between the two hills.

On arriving at her new quarters, Prairie-bird could not avoid being struck by the singularity, as well as by the beauty of the scenery. It was evident that the face of the sandstone rock, above which her tent was pitched, had been eaten away by the action of water and the elements; and she imagined that ere many years should pass, the precipitous cliff on its eastern front would partially fall in, and leave in its place a broken and turreted ruin, such as she had before noted and admired on the western borders of the great prairie. It was a great relief to her that she was so much by herself; for the lodge of Mahéga and his followers was pitched somewhat lower down the hill than her own tent; and she was yet further removed from the dirt and other annoyances of the Crow lodges. This was, indeed, a great luxury, as the quantity of bison-meat brought into the camp on the first day's hunt was so great, that the Upsaroka women were spreading and drying it in every direction: and as these ladies are not usually very particular in removing

the offal, the odour thence arising in the valley below was not the sweetest that could be imagined.

Mahéga was in high good humour in consequence of the successful result of his arrangements; for he now occupied a post not only well protected against the attack of an enemy, but where his baggage could not be purloined by the light-fingered youths, who are so proverbially abundant among the Crows. But however secure he might feel, he did not relax his usual vigilance, in which he was zealously seconded by Toweno; and whenever the one was absent from the garrison, even for a short time, the other always remained at home on the watch. He renewed, also, a rude breastwork of unhewn logs, which had been thrown up by the Crows on some former occasion, and which afforded a shelter, from behind which he and his men could fire upon an approaching enemy without being themselves exposed.

They had not long been settled in their new quarters before the detachment which had been sent to reconnoitre returned to report that they had seen the united band of white men and Delawares, about thirty in number, advancing cautiously along the base of the hills towards the Upsaroka camp. The scouts had recognised Reginald as the person who had killed one of their

principal warriors ; and the announcement of his approach was received with a yell that showed how determinately the Crows were bent on revenge.

A war-council was immediately held, which Mahéga was summoned to attend ; and although the wary Osage kept himself in the background, and showed no disposition to offer his advice until twice pressed by Besha to do so, it was soon evident that his spirit would rule the meeting, and that on him would devolve the conduct of the struggle in which they must soon expect to be engaged : such was the impression already made upon his new allies by his gigantic stature, and the air of command that accompanied his every word and gesture.

Unless the advantage of numbers was to be very great on his side, Mahéga did not augur favourably of the result of an open conflict between the Crows and the small but well-appointed force opposed to them. He formed a just estimate of the skill and sagacity of War-Eagle, and of the impetuous courage of Reginald Brandon. He hated both, especially the latter, with all the bitter intensity of which his nature was capable ; and resolved that no stratagem should be left untried to heap upon them every species of suffering and disgrace.

With this view, he conferred long, through the

medium of Besha, with the leading warriors of the Crows as to the nature of the ground in the neighbourhood of the enemy's line of march; being determined, if possible, to lead them into an ambush; or at least to attack them in some defile or pass, where the bow and arrow would be a better match for the rifle than in the open plain. Not being altogether satisfied with the replies which he received, he declined giving his opinion until he should have reconnoitered the district in person, and set forth without delay, accompanied by the dwarfish interpreter and two Crow warriors, all being mounted on swift horses.

Having reached the base of the first range of hills, the Crow who acted as guide struck into a narrow winding ravine; after following the course of which for some distance, the party emerged upon an elevated table-land, which they crossed at full speed, and found themselves at the base of a second range of hills, more broken and abrupt than the first. Here the guide and Mahéga dismounted, and having concealed the horses, and left them behind the projection of a rock in charge of the other two, they climbed with some difficulty to the brow of a sandstone cliff, whence they could command an extensive view of the region to the southward.

Creeping cautiously to the edge of the height, and screening themselves behind the junipers and

scanty bushes growing there, they could easily distinguish the camp of the Delawares and white men in the valley below. The band had come to a halt, and were evidently engaged in refreshing themselves and their horses with their midday meal.

The Osage chief glared upon them like a tiger on his anticipated prey. He examined the ground in front and rear and flank of their position; he noted the breadth of the pass where the valley opened out upon the plain beyond, and questioned his guide closely as to the route which they would probably take in advancing towards the Crow encampment.

We will leave him for a time to pursue these investigations, while we return to Reginald and War-Eagle, whom we left deliberating as to the most advisable course to be pursued for the rescue of Prairie-bird.

The Delaware chief having been soon informed by his scouts of the enemy's retreat to another and a stronger position, lost no time in pushing forward his party to the point in the valley where it had (as abovementioned) been descried by Ma-héga and his guide. Reginald and the other white men were at a loss to imagine why War-Eagle had selected for his halt a spot where a dense thicket on the side of each hill seemed to offer to an enemy, familiar with the country, a

favourable opportunity for attacking him unawares ; and even Baptiste, when questioned upon the subject, shook his head, saying, “ Wait till to-morrow ; we shall know by that time what hole the coon is making for.”

As for the Delawares, they ate their bison-meat and smoked their pipe with as much indifference as if they were in the heart of their own hunting-ground, being confident in the skill of their leader, from the experience of many a foray and fight. The latter, having thrown forward two or three of his men as outposts, to guard against surprise, summoned Wingenund, to whom he gave, in an earnest voice, some minute directions, which did not reach the ears of others in the party ; and the youth, as soon as he had received them, went up to Reginald, and said to him, “ Will Netis lend Nekimi to Wingenund ; he will be back before the moon is up,—and if he meets the Upsarokas, he must leave them behind.”

Reginald testified his willing assent to the youth’s request, and in a few minutes Nekimi was bounding over the prairie beneath his light burden with a speed that soon brought him to a point whence he could command a view of the two heights, upon and between which the Crows were encamped.

The sand-hills in that region project in many places from the base of the Great Mountains into

the open plain, like the promontories of an indented shore into the ocean, and it was by skirting one of these until he reached its extremity that he continued to watch the encampment of the Crows without being observed by their scouts; for several hours he stood motionless by the side of Nekimi, under the shade of a pine, with that untiring patience which renders an Indian unequalled as a spy, when he saw four horsemen emerge from the camp, and gallop off towards the base of the mountains. As soon as they entered a valley where they were screened from his view, he put Nekimi to his speed, and by a shorter cut reached the head of the same valley before them, then leaving his horse behind a thicket of junipers, he crept forward, and hiding himself in some brushwood, waited for the passing of the horsemen.

As the roughness of the ground had compelled them to slacken their speed, he had no difficulty in recognizing Mahéga, but the features of the misshapen interpreter and the Crow warriors were, of course, strange to him. He watched the Osage chief and his companion as they climbed the hill, from the top of which they made their observations of the Delaware camp; and as they returned and remounted their horses, they passed so near to his hiding-place that the youth distinctly heard two or three words which Mahéga spoke to Besha in the Osage tongue. As soon as

they were out of sight he hastened to the spot where he had left Nekimi, and returned at full speed to make his report to War-Eagle.

The chief had evidently been awaiting with some impatience the return of his messenger, and when he received the intelligence which the latter brought back, he said, "It is well, let Netis and the chiefs be called to council—there is no time to lose."

A few minutes sufficed to assemble the leaders, who were expected to take a part in the deliberations about to be entered upon, all of them being well aware of their vicinity to the enemy of whom they had so long been in pursuit; but when called upon to express their opinion as to the course to be adopted, a manifest reluctance prevailed, arising probably from the wild and rugged nature of the region, and from their ignorance of the strength of the band with which Mahéga had allied himself. After a brief pause, Baptiste, who was thoroughly versed in the character of the Delawares, arose and said, "Are the tongues of the warriors tied? the sun will not stay in his path, neither will the grass grow beneath the feet of the Washashee and Upsaroka; the white men and the Lenapé wait to hear the voice of the Great Chief —let War-Eagle speak."

Thus called upon, the Delaware leader came forward to address the council. He painted the

wrongs that his tribe had suffered at the hands of the Osages, the treachery and cruelties practised on their wives and children; then he dwelt on the spoiling of their lodges, the abduction of Prairie-bird, and the attempted murder of Wingenund. Having thus roused the passions of his Delaware hearers, he gradually brought them back to a calmer state of reflection, by representing to them the dangers and difficulties of their present position, owing to the alliance formed by their implacable enemy with the Upsaroka, who knew every pass and dangerous defile of the country through which they were marching, and he impressed upon them the necessity of their having recourse to stratagem in order to make up for their deficiency in numbers and in local knowledge. He then proceeded to unfold his plan of operations, which (as afterwards explained by Baptiste to Reginald and his friend) was nearly in the following words:

“ Mahéga and the Upsaroka will attack our camp to-night—the wolf shall fall into a trap—they will come to take scalps, let them look after their own—but we must divide our party—Wingenund has seen the Washashee camp, he shall guide ten warriors to it in the dark, and while Mahéga is leading his blind followers here, the tomahawk and the fire shall be in his lodge !”

A deep murmur of approbation satisfied the chief as to the sentiments of his stern and deter-

mined band ; and Ethelston, although he knew not the meaning of the words which had been uttered, was struck by the dignity with which they had been spoken, and by the rich and varied intonation of War-Eagle's voice.

"Reginald," said he, "how much I regret that I could not follow your Indian brother in his discourse. His attitudes brought to my mind the orators of old, as represented to us by classic pen and chisel : it seemed as if I could almost gather his meaning from his eloquence of eye and tone!"

"Certainly," replied Reginald, "whether the merit of oratory consists in action, as held by the 'old man eloquent who fulminated over Greece,' or in the art of persuasion, by convincing the judgment while moving the passions of the hearers, as held by the best authors who have since written on the subject, War-Eagle possesses it in an eminent degree."

"Yes," replied Ethelston, "I admit the persuasive power, and the action at once graceful and commanding, but I maintain that there is yet a stronger element, the mention of which you, and the authors whom you quote, have strangely neglected, namely, Truth ; that immortal essence, which pervades the whole intelligent creation, before which falsehood shrinks abashed, and sophistry vanishes into vapour. This it is that guides the winged words of man direct to the heart of his

brother: by this, and this alone, did the voice of Luther triumph over the thunders of the Vatican, and beneath its mighty influence the haughty Felix trembled before the captive apostle. This is, if I mistake not, the secret of your Indian friend's oratory; every word that he utters finds an echo in the breast of those whom he is addressing. The injuries that he recounts are recent; the dangers against which he warns them are real and present; and the vengeance to which he guides them, they pant for with a thirst ardent as his own."

"Far be it from me," replied Reginald, "to disparage the might and majesty of truth, or to doubt that in the end it must triumph over error and falsehood, as certainly as Good shall obtain the victory over Evil. Nevertheless, I hold, that as the object of eloquence frequently is to 'make the worse appear the better cause,' and to guide the hearers, not so much to their own real good as to the immediate purpose of the speaker, there are some occasions where he will more effectively attain it by working on their prejudices, frailties, and passions, than he could by the most direct appeal to justice or to truth. If Felix trembled at the denunciations of Paul, the bolder and mightier spirit of Wallenstein quailed before the wily astrologer, who pretended to have interwoven his destinies with the mysterious movements of the planets."

"I see the scope of your argument, Reginald, and acknowledge its force. It is because men obey the dictates of passion more willingly than those of conscience, that they are more easily led by the factious sophistry of a Cleon than by the virtuous wisdom of a Socrates. Nevertheless, you will not deny that even sophistry and faction bear testimony to the might of truth, by putting on her semblance, and disguising themselves as her followers: thus do they achieve success, until they encounter some champion strong enough to unmask and detect them; as the Trojans fled before Patroclus clad in the armour of Achilles, until Hector pierced his disguise, and killed him."

"Is it not strange," said Reginald, laughing, "that in this wild and remote region, and amidst its wandering tribes, we should renew discussions, which we so often held together in early days on the banks of the Elbe and Rhine! I remember that you generally beat me in argument, and yet permitted me to retain possession of the field of battle. On this occasion I think we must draw off our forces, and neither claim the victory. The Indians are already preparing for the night's expedition, and interests so dear to me depend upon its result, that I look forward to it with the deepest anxiety. If War-Eagle is correct in his calculation, that the Osages and their allies will attack our camp to-night, it is uncertain whether they

will carry Prairie-bird with them, or leave her behind under a guard. We must be prepared for either plan ; and in dividing our force arrange it so, that if we succeed, she may be sure of falling into the hands of those fit and authorised to protect her. I will take with me Wingenund, and our steady friends Baptiste and Pierre : do you remain with War-Eagle, Paul Müller, and the main body reserved for the defence of the camp."

" Be it so," replied Ethelston, " I trust we shall not be long separated, and that before this hour to-morrow we shall have rescued your betrothed from her captors." He added, with a smile, " Remember that in our German expedition you made me many promises of discretion, which in the excitement of action you were somewhat apt to forget; you must not do so now that you are engaged in the cause of one, to whom your life is perhaps dearer than it is to yourself."

" Baptiste himself shall not be more cautious than I will be," replied Reginald, grasping his friend's hand ; and they parted to make the requisite preparations for their respective duties.

CHAPTER III.

A SCENE IN THE TENT OF PRAIRIE-BIRD, WHO GIVES SOME GOOD ADVICE, AND RECEIVES IN A SHORT SPACE OF TIME MORE THAN ONE UNEXPECTED VISITOR.—THE CROWS LED BY MAHEGA ATTACK THE DELAWARE CAMP BY NIGHT.—THE DEFEATED PARTY ACHIEVE A KIND OF TRIUMPH, AND THE VICTORS MEET WITH AN UNEXPECTED LOSS.

THE evening passed away with the rapidity usual in that western region, where twilight has no sooner thrown its dusky hue over mountain and plain, than it again yields its place to the darker gloom of night; and yet it were a libel upon nature to call by the name of gloom that uncertain light in which that mighty landscape reposed. The moon was half full, and her beams, scarcely piercing through the deep foliage of the wooded vale, streaked with silver lines its mossy herbage; eastward lay the vast expanse of undulating prairie, on which countless herds of bison lazily cropped the dew-sprinkled grass, while high above the scene towered the gigantic peaks of the Western Andes, slumbering in a light as cold and pale as their own eternal snow.

~ Nothing was heard to disturb the reign of silence save the distant murmur of the streamlets as they plashed from rock to rock in their descent to the quiet river that flowed beneath ; or here and there the stealthy foot of the panther or prowling bear. A few stars glimmered in the vault above, and clouds of ever-varying shape fitted athwart its surface, now hiding, and again partially revealing the dark outlines of forest, vale, and rugged cliff.

It was an hour and a scene calculated to inspire thoughts of awe, piety, and gratitude towards the Creator ; of love, gentleness, and peace towards His creatures ; and yet through those groves and glens feet more stealthy than the panther's step, foes more fell than the prowling bear, now wound their silent way, bent on their secret errand of destruction and of blood.

In one quarter Reginald, followed by Baptiste, Pierre, and six men, moved swiftly across the prairie, under the guidance of Wingenund, towards the camp of the Osages ; in another, Mahéga led a numerous band through the defiles before described, to surprise the encampment of the Delawares ; while at the latter place War-Eagle, aided by Attō and his chosen warriors, was making all the necessary dispositions for a stratagem by which he hoped to defeat the expected attack of his enemies.

It was already several hours past midnight, the moon had withdrawn her light, and Prairie-bird was buried in the refreshing sleep that visits the eyelids of guileless youth; Lita slumbered on a couch of skins stretched across the entrance of her mistress's tent, before which at a little distance the Osage sentry, seated by the breastwork thrown up for the defence of the position, hummed a low and plaintive air of his tribe. Suddenly his ear caught the sound of approaching feet, and quick as thought the arrow was fitted to his bowstring, but he checked the hasty movement, remembering that sentries were posted at the base of the hill, who would not have permitted any hostile step to approach unchallenged. As the new comers drew near he distinguished through the gloom the figures of a man and a woman, the former short and square-built, the latter slight and graceful.

"What do the strangers seek?" inquired Towe-no, for he it was whom Mahéga had left in charge of his camp, and who now guarded the tent of Prairie-bird.

"Toweno is a great warrior among the Washashe; his voice is welcome to the ear of a friend," replied, in the Osage tongue, the rough voice of Besha, the horse-dealer. "The Upsaroka maiden wishes to speak with Olitipa, the Great Medicine of the tent."

"This is not a time for maidens to visit or to

speak," replied Toweno; "the feet of the braves are on the night-path, and many wives who sleep now will be widows ere the sun is up."

"Besha knows it well," answered the horse-dealer; "nor can he understand how Toweno is in the camp while Mahéga and his warriors are on the bloody-path."

"The Pale-faces are cunning," replied the Osage, "and Mahéga would not leave the rich skins of otter, beaver, and bison, and the Great Medicine of the tent, without a guard."

"The Pale-faces will not come near the high-camp," said Besha, casting a rapid glance over the bales of fur and cloth. "Have you many warriors left with you?"

"Four of the Washashe, and four times four of the Upsaroka, is the band in camp;*" but what does the woman desire of Olitipa?"

"She is the youngest and favourite wife of the Upsaroka chief," replied Besha, lowering his voice, "and she desires a medicine that his love for

* The various methods of counting adopted by the western tribes are curious in the extreme; some reckon chiefly by fives, and among these an expression equivalent to "hands and feet" signifies "twenty;" in one language the number eight, is expressed by a word meaning six with two; in another by a word signifying ten without two: in fact, some very interesting illustrations of their language and modes of thought might be drawn from an accurate investigation of their numerals, but they would be entirely out of place in a work of fiction.

her may never change; her heart is good towards the Washashe, and her hands are not empty." Here he whispered a few words to his companion, and the girl timidly extending her hand placed in that of the Osage a small roll of tobacco.

The grim features of the warrior relaxed into a smile, as his fingers closed upon the scarce and much coveted leaf,* and without further delay he moved to the entrance of the tent, and wakening Lita, desired her to arouse her mistress for a conference with the bride of the Upsaroka chief.

Although surprised at this unexpected summons, Prairie-bird hastened to receive her visitor, supposing that some sudden illness or accident must be the cause of her coming at such an hour. Her simple toilet was soon made; and fastening to her girdle the bag containing the slender stock of instruments and trifles that she always carried with her, she stepped into the outer compartment of the tent, and desired Lita to admit the stranger.

The Crow girl, led by Besha, came forward with apparent reluctance, obviously under the influence of the greatest terror, and Prairie-bird was, for the moment, annoyed at the admission

* Tobacco is extremely scarce, and highly valued among the western tribes; at the close of the last century it was probably unknown among the Crows, so that we must suppose that the horse-dealer produced this present from his own stores, and for purposes best known to himself.

into her tent of a man whom she had only seen once or twice before, and whose appearance was forbidding in the extreme; but quickly remembering that without him it would have been impossible to communicate with her visitor, she desired Lita to place three mats; and seating herself upon one, kindly took the Crow girl by the hand, drawing her gently to that nearest to herself; then motioning to Besha to occupy the third, she requested him in the Delaware tongue, to explain the object of this nightly visit.

"The tale of the Upsaroka maid is secret," he replied; "it is only for the ears of Olitipa."

At a signal from her mistress, Lita, throwing a blanket over her shoulder, stepped into the open air, and leaned against the breastwork not far from the post of Toweno.

"Does the 'Bending-willow' wish all to be told?" inquired Besha of his companion in a whisper.

Bending-willow, who had not yet dared to lift her eyes from the ground, now timidly raised them; and encountering the kind and encouraging glance of Prairie-bird, answered, "Let all be told."

Having received this permission, the one-eyed horse-dealer proceeded to relate, with more feeling than could have been expected from his harsh and uncouth appearance, the story of his fair com-

panion. She was the daughter of the principal brave in the nation; both he and his only son had fallen lately in a bloody engagement with the Black-feet. The father had, with his dying breath, bequeathed his surviving child to the protection of his chief, and the latter had fulfilled the trust by giving her in marriage to his eldest son, a gallant youth, who although not yet twenty-five years of age, had already two wives in his lodge, and had taken many scalps from the Black-feet, against whom he was now absent on an expedition undertaken to avenge the slain relations of his newly espoused bride.

Bending-willow, who had not yet seen eighteen summers, was passionately fond of her young lord, who now returned her affection with an ardour equal to her own; this had moved the spite and jealousy of his two former wives, who took no pains to conceal their hatred of her; and although they dared not strike or ill-treat her as long as she remained the favourite, they endeavoured by every means in their power to vex and annoy her, and to bring her, by degrees, under the suspicion and distrust of their husband.

It was to obtain from Prairie-bird a medicine by which she might secure his continued affection, that Bending-willow had made this visit; and she had come stealthily by night, in hopes of escaping thereby the observation of her watchful colleagues.

During the horse-dealer's recital, Prairie-bird glanced more than once at the young woman's countenance, of which she was enabled by the red light of the wormwood torch that burnt near the centre of the tent, to distinguish the features and expression; both were remarkably pleasing and attractive, while the long black hair falling over her shoulders in two plaits, interwoven with beads of various colours, was set off by the delicate hue of the fawn-skin dress, which displayed to advantage the symmetry of her slight and graceful figure. Prairie-bird took her hand in silence, and the Crow girl fixed her eyes with guileless and admiring wonder upon the surpassing loveliness of the "Great Medicine of the tent," which struck her the more forcibly, as she had come in the expectation of seeing a person decked out and ornamented after the fantastic fashion adopted among the Indian tribes by those who pretend to supernatural powers.

After a brief silence, Prairie-bird, addressing her visitor through the interpreter, said, "When the wives of the young chief scold and speak bad words to Bending-willow, what does she reply?"

"She gives them bad words again, sharper and harder than their own," answered the bride hastily.

Prairie-bird shook her head, and continued, "Has Bending-willow watched their faces when

they scold and heap angry words upon her? How do they look then?"

"They look ugly and spiteful as spotted snakes!"

"Bending-willow has come for a medicine to make the love of her husband endure fresh and green as the valleys watered by the Nebraska! Does she think he would love her if when he returns to his lodge he hears sharp angry tones in her voice, and sees spiteful looks in her countenance? The Great Spirit has made her face and voice sweet as the breath of the morning; if she makes them ugly and harsh, the medicine of Olitipa cannot preserve her husband's love."

The Crow bride cast down her eyes, evidently confused and puzzled by this address. At length she inquired, in a subdued tone, "What, then, is the counsel of Olitipa? What is Bending-willow to do when these sharp tongues scold and rail at her?"

Prairie-bird opened the volume that lay beside her, and answered, "The words of the Great Spirit are, 'A soft answer turneth away anger!' When the tongues of the women are bitter against Bending-willow, let her give gentle words in reply; they will be ashamed, and will soon be silent."

"But," said the quick-tempered bride, "the angry spirit gets into the heart of Bending-willow:

when fire is in the breast, cool water flows not from the tongue!"

"Olitipa will give a medicine to her sister," replied our heroine; and opening a case that stood near her, she drew thence a small hand-mirror. Presenting this to her visitor, she added, "When Bending-willow finds the angry spirit in her heart, and bitter words ready on her tongue, let her look at her face in this medicine-glass, and say to herself, 'Are these the soft eyes that the chief loves to look upon?'"

The bride took the glass, and contemplated her features therein, apparently not without satisfaction. But their expression was troubled, for she was frightened at the words which Prairiebird had told her were those of the Great Spirit, and her eyes wandered from the book to the maiden, as if she would willingly learn more of her mysterious communion with the powers above.

At this crisis the wild war-cry of the Crows rang through the tent; several shots followed each other in rapid succession, mingled with the whistling of arrows, and the clash of blows, while loud above the din of the conflict rose the voice of Toweno, urging and encouraging his men.

Besha started to his feet, and rushed from the tent to learn whence came this sudden and unexpected attack, and Lita hastened to the side

of her mistress, as if resolved to share her fate, whatever that might be.

Louder and nearer came the mingled cries and yells of battle, and a stray rifle-ball pierced the canvass of the tent, leaving a rent in it close to the head of Prairie-bird. She neither stirred nor spoke; and as the wailing and terrified Bending-willow, the daughter and the bride of warriors inured to scenes of blood, looked on the pale, calm cheek of the Christian maiden, whose hand still rested on the mysterious volume, she felt as if in the presence of a superior being, and crept closer to her side for protection and security.

But we must leave the tent and its inmates, and turn to the scene of strife without. The darkness of night was giving place to the grey hue of dawn, and a faint streak of light was already discernible in the eastern horizon, ere Reginald's party, guided by Wingenund, was able to reach the base of the hill on which the Osages were posted. His intention had been to arrive there several hours sooner; but he had been prevented by various obstacles, such as might be expected to occur on a night-march through so rugged and difficult a country, and also by the necessity of making a considerable circuit to avoid being seen by the Crows encamped, as was before mentioned, on a hill on the opposite side of the valley.

Reginald had no means of ascertaining the force that might be left to guard the camp and the tent, and it appeared rash in the extreme to attempt by daylight the storming, with only ten men, a position so fortified by nature, and defended by warriors familiar with its local advantages. But his impetuous ardour had communicated itself to all his party, and it was unanimously agreed that the attack should be made.

In the sketch before given of the Osage camp, it was stated that the hill was steep, and of a conical shape, sloping less abruptly towards the valley, while the front that it presented to the prairie eastward was precipitous and inaccessible. The attacking party had made their approach from this quarter, rightly conjecturing that it would be left unguarded. They succeeded in gaining the base of the cliff unperceived; but in spite of the caution with which they advanced towards the more sloping face of the hill, they were descried by the enemy's outposts, who discharged at them a flight of arrows, uttering at the same time the shrill war-cry, that had startled the party within the tent.

There being now light sufficient to enable the combatants to distinguish each other, the rifles of the white men told with fatal effect, and several of the Crows fell at their first fire; the remainder retreated, fighting, towards the breastwork above,

whither Reginald's party pursued them with an impetuosity not to be resisted. When, however, the Crows gained the protection of the breast-work, they recovered from their temporary panic ; and animated by the example of Toweno, and the few Osages with him, let fly their arrows with precision and effect.

The leader of the Osages, and one of his band, were provided with rifles, and although the attacking party availed themselves of the occasional shelter of trees and bushes in their ascent, two of them received severe bullet-wounds from the marksmen securely posted above. They were not unnoticed by the quick eye of Baptiste, who, having reloaded his long rifle, deliberately waited until the Osage beside Toweno showed the upper part of his head above the breastwork as he aimed at Reginald, now within pistol-shot of him. The finger of the savage was on the trigger, when a ball from the rifle of the Guide struck him in the centre of the forehead, and with a convulsive bound he fell dead on the spot, overthrowing in his fall Toweno, whose rifle was thereby for the moment rendered unserviceable.

“ Forward ! Master Reginald,” shouted the Guide ; “ Wingenund is already at the breast-work ! ”

Light as an antelope, and active as a mountain cat, the Delaware youth had distanced all his com-

panions in the ascent; and regardless of the fearful odds of numbers opposed to him, was already clambering over the stockade, when an arrow pierced his arm, and a war-club, hurled with equal force and precision, struck him on the head, and he fell backwards at the feet of Reginald. The latter, rendered desperate by the fall of his Indian brother, caught from Baptiste the huge axe that hung at his belt, and springing forward to the stockade, soon hewed himself a passage through its wooden barrier—wounded slightly by an arrow in his thigh, grazed by another on the cheek, his hunting-cap pierced and carried from his head, it seemed as though his life were charmed against the missiles of the enemy—and despite every obstacle, he stood at length within the breastwork, followed by Baptiste and his brave companions. The Guide, whose cool and wary eye noted every movement, had reserved the fire of the pistols in his belt, and twice, while his young master was hewing with reckless daring at the tough barrier, had an unerring ball from *them* rendered powerless an arm raised for his destruction.

Although still superior in numbers in the proportion of two to one, the allied band of Osages and Crows were so discouraged by the storming of their barrier, that they offered but a feeble resistance, each endeavouring to provide for his own safety. Toweno alone, aided by one of the brav-

est warriors of his band, determined in this fatal crisis to execute the bloody orders of Mahéga ; and by a preconcerted signal, as soon as Reginald made good his footing within the breastwork, they rushed into the tent of Prairie-bird.

From the beginning of the affray, the terrified Upsaroka bride had never moved from the side of our heroine, on whose countenance she fixed her anxious eyes, as if expecting from her some display of supernatural power for their common protection. Lita clung also to the arm of her mistress ; and the Christian maiden, trusting to that Word on which her hand and her heart alike reposed, awaited with patient resignation the issue of a peril, of which she knew neither the nature nor the extent. That the camp was attacked she was well aware, by the shouts and cries of the combatants ; but who the attacking party might be, and whether likely to fail or to succeed, she had no means of judging.

Besha had in the commencement of the affray shot several arrows from the breastwork at the invaders ; but seeing them press forward with such determined resolution, he bethought himself of the bride, for whose safety he was responsible, and retired within the tent, resolved, if possible, to withdraw her from the scene of confusion while there might yet be time for escape ; but Bending-willow obstinately refused to quit the side of Prairie-

bird, and he was still urging his entreaties to that effect, when the two Osages burst into the tent.

"Let the Medicine-woman of the Bad Spirit die," shouted Toweno, as he raised his tomahawk to strike; but Besha caught the descending blow, and endeavoured to avert the murderous weapon from his hold. Meanwhile the other Osage advanced to execute the fell purpose of his leader, when the devoted Lita, throwing herself in his way, clung to his upraised arm with the strength of despair. Slight, however, was the resistance which she could offer; and the savage, throwing her with violence to the ground, again raised his knife above the head of his unresisting victim. Lita shrieked aloud, and the fate of Prairie-bird seemed inevitable, when a warlike figure burst into the tent, and Reginald Brandon, still wielding the axe of Baptiste, stood in the midst of the group. His fiery glance fell upon the savage about to strike his beloved, and swift as thought that terrible weapon descending, clove the Indian's skull.

By this time Toweno had freed himself from Besha, whom he had rendered almost helpless by two severe wounds with his scalp-knife, and he now flew at Reginald with the fury of a tiger at bay; but the presence of Prairie-bird nerved her lover's arm with threefold strength, and parrying the blow which his opponent aimed at his throat, he passed his cutlass through the body of the Osage,

and threw him, bleeding and mortally wounded, several yards from the tent. At this moment a shout of triumph without, raised by Baptiste and his companions, assured Reginald that the victory was complete, and that those of the enemy who survived had fled and left him in possession of the camp. Then he cast himself on his knees by the side of his betrothed, and as she leaned her head upon his shoulder, a flood of tears relieved the suppressed emotions caused by the fearful trial that she had undergone. Few and broken were the words that passed between them, yet in those few words what volumes of the heart's grateful and affectionate language were expressed !

The entrance of Baptiste recalled to the recollection of Reginald the duties that still remained for him to perform, while the wounds received by Besha in her defence, pleaded with the maiden for such remedies as she had within her power. After briefly explaining to her lover the circumstances which had brought the horse-dealer and his still trembling companion to her tent, she sought her stock of healing ointments and salves ; while Reginald, although slightly wounded, went out to arrange with Baptiste and Pierre for the defence of their newly-acquired possession, and to ascertain the loss which his party had sustained. This last was less than he had feared it might prove ; and it was with heartfelt pleasure that he shook by the

hand young Wingenund, who had recovered from the stunning effects of the blow which he had received in his gallant attack upon the breastwork.

"Let my young brother go into the tent," said Reginald; "rest will do him good, and the eyes of Olitipa will be glad to see him."

As the youth turned away, Baptiste added, "Let not the man nor the Crow woman escape; we may want them yet."

Wingenund replied by a sign of intelligence, and entered the compartment of the tent, where he found his sister exercising her office of charity.

We will now leave Reginald Brandon and his party busily employed in repairing the breach made in the breastwork, in examining and strengthening all the defences of the post (which they found much stronger than they had expected), and in making all the requisite preparations for the attack which they anticipated on the return of Mahéga and his Crow allies. The booty, ammunition, and supplies found in the camp, exceeded their expectations, as in searching the Osage lodges they discovered all the goods stolen by the latter from the Delawares. The eyes of Baptiste and Pierre brightened at the sight of this recovered treasure; those experienced hunters well knowing that the Osage chief, when deprived of the means of offering presents or bribes, would

not long retain the friendship of his treacherous allies.

We will now go back for a few hours, and see with what success he met in the expedition which he undertook against the camp of War-Eagle. So confident did he feel in its issue that he had prevailed upon two-thirds of the fighting men of the Crows to join his party, promising them abundance of scalps and plunder, as well as revenge for the losses which they had sustained at the hands of Reginald's band. Having already carefully noted all the land-marks on the path by which he meant to make his approach, he followed it with instinctive sagacity, and a few hours' rapid night-march along the base of the hills brought him to the opening of the narrow valley, at the upper extremity of which the enemy's camp was posted. Here they slackened their speed, and advanced in silence with noiseless step, Mahéga stealing onward in front, darting his quick glance from side to side, as if he would penetrate the gloom, rendered yet deeper by the trees and rocks, beneath which they wound their cautious way. It was not long before he was enabled to distinguish the site of the Delaware camp, by the ruddy glare cast by the watch-fires on the surrounding foliage. The Osage stopped and pointed out the welcome beacon to his followers—not a word was spoken—

every warrior there knew the preconcerted plan of attack, and was aware that a careless step upon a dry stick might discover and defeat it. Mahéga carried a rifle, and the discharge of it was to be immediately followed by a flight of arrows from his party, after which they were to rush on the surprised foe, with battle-axe and tomahawk. Onward moved the dusky band; and it seemed as if fate had given the enemy into their power. Not a deer nor mountain-cat was startled from its lair to give warning of their approach; and at length Mahéga succeeded in creeping to the bushy summit of a hillock, whence, at a distance of less than fifty yards, he commanded a view of the camp below.

"For once, have the cunning and watchfulness of War-Eagle failed him," said the triumphant Osage to himself, as he loosened the thong of his war-club, and thrust forward the barrel of his rifle.

One by one of his followers crept forward, until they lay in line beside him, behind the crest of the hillock, over which their eager eyes looked down with savage anticipation upon the Delaware camp. The moon had entirely withdrawn her light, and all the scene was wrapt in impenetrable gloom, save where the camp-fires cast a red glare on the bark and branches of the surrounding trees, and on the figures which lay around, enveloped in blanket or in bison-robe; no sound disturbed the

deep silence of the night, except the nibbling bite of the horses as they cropped the cool grass of the valley below the camp. For a minute Mahéga contemplated, with fierce delight, the helpless condition of his hated foes, then taking deliberate aim at a blanketed form supported against the tree nearest to the fires, he pulled the fatal trigger, and without waiting to see the effect of his shot, he shouted his battle-cry, and sprang forward with his war-club towards the camp. Scarcely had the bullet left his rifle ere the Crows discharged their arrows, each aiming at the figure that he could the most easily distinguish; then they rushed forward to complete the work of destruction with knife and tomahawk.

Leaping into the camp, fifty of the savages were already in the full glare of its fires, when a shrill whistle was heard, and the simultaneous report of a dozen rifles echoed through mountain, forest, and valley. So near were the marksmen, and so true their aim, that not a bullet failed to carry a death or fatal wound; and the surviving Crows now first ascertained that the figures which they had been piercing were stuffed with grass, and wrapped in blankets or robes, so as to resemble sleeping warriors! Great was their terror and dismay; they knew neither the number nor position of their concealed foe, and the master-spirit who had led them, and to whose guidance they trusted for their extrica-

tion, was nowhere to be seen. Such had been the impetuous haste of the Osage to satisfy his desire for vengeance, that in his rapid descent upon the enemy's camp he had caught his foot in a tough and tangled ground-brier, and had fallen headlong forwards. It happened that the very spot where he fell was the post of one of the concealed Delawares, who grappled with him before he could rise to continue his course.

Though taken thus by surprise and at disadvantage, the fierce Osage lost not for a moment his courage or self-possession; seizing the up-raised arm of his antagonist, he wrenched the knife from his grasp, and, swift as thought, drove it into the heart of his foe; then tearing off the scalp, and suspending it to his belt, he looked upon the scene of confusion and slaughter below. A glance sufficed to show him that he had fallen into the trap that he had prepared for others, and that a continued contest with an enemy armed with rifles, and securely hidden, must be attended with great and unavailing loss. His own person had not yet come within the light of the fires, neither had the groans of the dying Delaware been heard amid the yells of the Crow attack, and the succeeding report of the guns; thus was the Osage enabled to retire unobserved a score of paces into the wood, bearing with him the yet undischarged rifle of the Delaware whom he had

slain ; then he applied his war-whistle* to his lips, and blew a loud and shrill recall.

Glad were his faithful followers and the terrified Crows to hear and obey the signal ; yet did they not leave the scene without further loss, for ere they got beyond the circle around which the camp-fires shed their uncertain light, another volley was fired after them by the enemy, and although none were killed by this second discharge, many were so grievously wounded that they were with difficulty borne off by their companions. It was some relief to them in their hasty retreat to find that they were not pursued. Mahéga placed himself in the rear ; he even lingered many yards behind the rest, crouching now and then behind tree or bush in hopes of being able to slake his burning thirst for revenge ; but in vain, War-Eagle was too sagacious to pursue by night, in an unknown and broken country, an enemy who, although dismayed and panic-struck, still out-numbered his band in the proportion of three to one.

“ Bloody-hand, the great warrior of the Osages,

* Some of the Indian warriors when leading a war-party carry a shrill whistle, wherewith they direct the movements of their followers. These whistles vary as to their form and ornament according to the tribe to which the leader belongs. Those which the Author has seen in most frequent use were made from the bone of the wild turkey’s leg, and were fancifully adorned with stained porcupine-quills.

will not come again soon to visit the Lenape camp," said War-Eagle, in answer to Ethelston's congratulations, as they stood surrounded by their victorious handful of men on the spot whence they had just driven the enemy with so much slaughter. "Let Attō count the dead," continued the chief, "and bring in the wounded, if any are found."

"War-Eagle," said the Missionary, who from his concealment had been an unwilling spectator of the late brief, but sanguinary skirmish, "forbear to exercise here the cruel usages of Indian war; let the wounded be cared for, and the dead be put to rest in peace below the earth."

"The ears of War-Eagle are open to the Black Father's words," replied the chief sternly; "if any wounded are found, they shall suffer no further hurt: but the scalps of the dead shall hang on the medicine-pole of the Lenape village, that the spirits of Tamenund and his fathers may know that their children have taken vengeance on the forked-tongued Washashe."

Further conversation was interrupted by a cry uttered by Attō, who had found the body of the unhappy Delaware slain by Mahéga. The whole party hastened to the spot, and War-Eagle, without speaking a word, pointed to the reeking skull whence the fierce Osage had torn the scalp.

Paul Müller, feeling that all reply would be

ill-timed and unavailing, turned away, and walked towards the feeding-place of the horses, while the Delawares scalped, and threw into an adjacent hollow, the bodies of the Crows and Osages who had fallen. Of the latter they counted two, and of the former ten, besides a much greater number whom they knew to have been borne off mortally wounded.

As the Missionary strolled onward, accompanied by Ethelston, a low moan caught his ear, and stooping down, he discerned an Indian coiled up in a position indicative of intense agony under the branches of a juniper. They carried him back to the camp-fire, and on examining him by its light, he proved to be a young Crow warrior, shot through the body, who had dragged himself with difficulty for some distance, and had then fallen exhausted to the ground. Doubtless he expected to be immediately scalped and dispatched, nor could he for some time be induced to believe that those into whose hands he had fallen were indeed endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings.

War-Eagle, faithful to his promise, rendered every assistance in his power to the worthy Missionary while thus employed, but it might easily be seen by the scornful curl of his lip that he looked upon this care of an enemy wounded in battle as an absurd and effeminate practice.

Day broke, and the dispirited band of Crow and Osage warriors returned from their fruitless expedition, only to find a worse disaster at home. Great, indeed, was their dismay, when they were met by a scout from their village, who informed them that a party of white men had stormed the Osage camp by night, and still retained possession of it, having destroyed the greater proportion of those left to defend it. In his description of the attack, the height, the strength, the daring and impetuous courage of the young warrior who had led it, were painted in colours exaggerated by terror; yet the Osage chief had no difficulty in recognizing the hated rival who had struck and disgraced him, and who was now master of the fate of her for whose sake he had toiled, and plotted, and suffered so much.

Stung to the quick by these suggestions of wounded jealousy and pride, he ground his teeth with fury that would not be repressed, and he swore that before two suns had risen and set, either he or his rival, or both, should see the light of day no more. His position was now precarious in the extreme, all his goods and ammunition having fallen into the enemy's hands, excepting that which he and his few remaining followers had about their persons. He knew that if he no longer possessed the means of making presents, the Crows would abandon, if not betray him at

once, and he resolved to strike some sudden and decisive blow before that thought should obtain possession of their minds.

This resolve imparted again to his manner its usual fierce and haughty grandeur, and, although the Crows loved him not, they could not help looking with a certain awe upon the man who, amid the confusion and panic of the late disastrous attack upon the Delaware camp, had borne away from the victorious enemy the bloody trophy which now hung at his belt, and who, although he had lost by a single blow his lodges, his supplies, and the Great Medicine of the tent, preserved unsubdued the commanding pride of his demeanour.

The success of the stratagem which he now meditated will appear in due season; meanwhile we must return to the camp of War-Eagle, who began his march at dawn of day with the view of rejoining Reginald and his band with the least possible delay.

Although he did not anticipate any attempt at reprisals on the part of the Crows to whom he had just given so severe a lesson, yet he was aware of Ma-héga's having escaped, and well knew that he would leave untried no schemes for obtaining revenge.

On this account the Delaware chief went forward to the front, taking with him several of his warriors, whom he sent out from time to time to examine the ground, and leaving Attō with Ethelston

and Paul Müller, to bring up the rear. The latter could not be prevailed upon to abandon the wounded Crow, whom he had placed upon his own horse, which he led by the bridle, while Ethelston supported the sufferer in the saddle.

Ever since the occasion when Reginald Brandon had presented to Attō the bear-claw collar as a testimony to his bravery, the Delaware had attached himself more and more to the white men; and although, with the instinctive sagacity of his race, he foresaw that the best exertions of the two now in his company would fail to effect a cure of the wounded man, he willingly and good-humouredly assisted their charitable endeavours.

In this order they had marched for some hours, and the leaders of the band having attained the summit of a ridge, already saw at no great distance the two remarkable hills before-mentioned as the favourite encampment of the Crows. Encouraged by the sight, they descended the opposite slope with increased speed, War-Eagle being most anxious to learn the success of Reginald's detachment. The whole band had passed over the summit of the ridge excepting the small party who escorted the wounded Crow, when the latter grew so faint from the effects of internal bleeding that they were no longer able to keep him in the saddle, and deposited him gently on the grass. The poor fellow pointed to his parched lips, and made an imploring sign for water.

Paul Müller casting his eyes around, saw at a small distance a broken ravine or fissure, in which he hoped that some rain-water might be found, and he desired Attō to hasten thither with all speed.

The Delaware obeyed, and had approached within a few paces of its edge, when an arrow from an unseen enemy pierced him through the breast, and Mahéga, leaping from his concealment, killed the brave fellow with his club, and attached another Lenape scalp to his belt. He was followed by eight or ten well-armed Crow warriors, who, passing him while he stooped over his fallen enemy, hastened forward and surrounded Paul Müller, Ethelston, and the wounded man. Great was their astonishment at recognizing in the latter a highly-esteemed brave of their own tribe, and greater still at observing that the two white men were so busily engaged in tending and supporting him in his sufferings, as not to have noticed their approach.

When Ethelston became aware of their presence, his first impulse was to lay his hand upon a pistol in his belt, but with the steady self-possession of true courage, he saw at a glance that he should, by unavailing resistance, only cause the certain death of himself and his peaceable companion, so he continued his attentions to the wounded man, and poured into his mouth the last few drops of a cordial which he had reserved in a leather flask.

Fresh from the slaughter of the unfortunate

Attō, Mahéga now came forward, and would have sacrificed the unresisting Missionary to his blind fury, had not one of the Crow warriors caught his arm, and pointed in an attitude of remonstrance to his wounded comrade.

The Osage perceived at once that the time was not propitious for his indiscriminate revenge, and contented himself with explaining by signs to his allies that ere long the party now out of sight behind the hill, would reappear over its crest in search of their missing companions.

This hint was not lost upon the Crows, who forthwith deprived Ethelston of his arms, and, tying him with a leather thong to the Missionary, hurried them along in an oblique direction towards an adjoining thicket, while some of them relieved each other in the care of the dying man.

War-Eagle was already far advanced in his descent of the hill on the opposite side, when his progress was arrested by shouts and cries from the rear. On looking round he perceived that these proceeded from Monsieur Perrot, who was waving his arms, and with other gesticulations, indicative of the greatest excitement, calling upon the chief to return.

“Varicle, Varicle, come quick back!”

Although the latter had little regard for the character of the French valet, he saw that something alarming had occurred; and hastening to the

spot, scarcely waited to hear his explanation that "Monsieur Etelston, de Black Fader, and de wounded Corbeau, were not to be seen," but pushed on at once to the top of the hill, over which he had so lately passed.

Casting his anxious eyes around, he looked in vain for the missing members of his party; but he saw at a considerable distance on the back trail the Missionary's pony quietly cropping the prairie-grass. Having called one of his men to his side and given him a few brief instructions, he returned speedily towards the scene of the late catastrophe, and on approaching it, found the scalped and plundered body of Attō, from which the Crows had carried off the arms, the belt, and the bear-claw collar given to him by Reginald. Although deeply grieved at the loss of the bravest of his followers, War-Eagle was too much inured to scenes of strife and bloodshed to give way to any emotion save the ardent desire for revenge; and he struck off alone upon the enemy's trail, some of his party following him at a distance.

As he approached the thicket, his attention was caught by a column of smoke ascending from a point near the centre of it; and he judged that the band must be very strong, either in their position or in numbers, if they could have the audacity thus to light a camp-fire in defiance, as it were, of his pursuit. Influenced by this consideration, he

waited until his whole party had come up, when he again moved forward towards the wood, cautiously watching every bush and shrub, in momentary expectation of seeing the enemy start from the covert.

These precautions seemed, however, altogether unnecessary; for he reached unmolested the spot whence he had seen the smoke ascend, and on his arrival found that the fire was consuming the last mortal remains of some human being, whose bones were mingled with its dying embers. This he knew at once to have been the wounded Crow who had expired in the arms of his companions, and to whom they had paid in their retreat this hasty funeral rite, to prevent his body from being liable to any indignities in the event of a pursuit. The quiver and tomahawk of the deceased warrior were suspended by a branch over his funeral pyre, and War-Eagle turned from the spot in moody, silent meditation. He felt assured that the retreating party were now too far advanced for him to overtake them, unless he gave up the idea of joining Reginald; and he thought it by no means improbable that this attack had been devised for the purpose of preventing that junction so important to the safety of both parties; wherefore he resolved to effect it without delay, and afterwards to employ all possible means for the recovery of the prisoners.

With this view he returned upon his steps; and having seen the last honours paid to the remains of the faithful Attō, again proceeded in the direction of the Crow camp.

As his little band drew near upon the prairie it was distinctly visible from both the fortified hills, and some fifty or sixty horsemen galloped out from the higher of the two, with the apparent intention of attacking him; but the steady front presented by the white men and Delawares deterred them from approaching too near the glittering tubes levelled to receive them, and they galloped and wheeled in rapid circles over the prairie, taking care, however, to keep beyond rifle range. At this juncture the cheering notes of a bugle rose on the air; and Reginald, who had descried his friends, now came down with two men from his little garrison to meet them. The Crows, seeing that further opposition on the open ground was unavailing, retired with threats and yells to their camp; and a few minutes afterwards the parties under War-Eagle and Reginald were reunited within the little fortress so hardly won by the latter, who now learnt, with unspeakable regret, the capture of Ethelston and Paul Müller, and the death of the brave warrior who had shared with him the perils of the first skirmish with the Crows.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEGOTIATION SET ON FOOT BY REGINALD FOR THE RELEASE OF HIS FRIENDS.—BESHA BECOMES AN IMPORTANT PERSONAGE.

SCARCELY had War-Eagle entered within the breastwork by the side of his friend, ere his eager and indefatigable spirit prompted him to inspect the defences of their new camp, and to guard every approach open to the attacks of their dangerous neighbours. On this service Baptiste willingly agreed to accompany the chief; and while they were thus employed, Reginald undertook the painful task of communicating to Prairie-bird the intelligence that her beloved instructor was, with his friend Ethelston, a captive in the hands of the Crows.

Trials and sufferings of her own the maiden could bear with fortitude; but her feelings towards the Missionary were those of the fondest daughter towards a parent; and when she thought of the risk that he incurred of ill-usage or death at the hands of his captors, she burst into tears, and

exclaimed, “ Oh, Reginald ! cannot he be rescued ere it be too late ? ”

At the sound of that voice, and the sight of those tears, Reginald’s heart would have prompted him to rush headlong into the camp of the Upsarokas ; but he felt that he would thereby only sacrifice his own life without effecting the object in view ; and, moreover, he was by no means certain whether Mahéga and his party had conveyed their prisoners to the central camp.

The doubt and anxiety of his mind were plainly visible on his countenance, when a low voice whispered in his ear, “ May Wingenund speak to Netis ? ”

“ Surely, dear brother,” said Reginald, laying his hand kindly on the youth’s shoulder, “ when I remember that it was Wingenund who guided me over the prairie to his sister’s tent, I were worse than ungrateful to reject his counsel now ! ”

“ That young woman,” he replied, pointing to the captive bride seated in the corner of the tent, “ is dear to the Upsaroka chief; she is his youngest wife, and his heart is warm towards her. Let the one-eyed stranger from the unknown tribes, who speaks many tongues, go back to the Crow camp, and tell the chief that if his prisoners are hurt, his bride shall be burnt alive ; if they are set free, she shall return unhurt to his lodge.”

“ It is a brave device, dear Wingenund, and

shall be executed without loss of time; but can we trust the stranger?"

"Methinks you may," said Prairie-bird, "for he received his wound in defending me from those cruel men."

"True," replied Reginald; "let my brother speak to him in the Delaware tongue, and explain the message he is to bear."

"It is well," answered the youth; adding, with an arch look, "and let Netis not send him away with empty hands. There is cunning in the stranger's eye, he knows that Mahéga is poor; and he will rather make friends with those who have something to give."

"Be it so," said Reginald, laughing; and he forthwith desired one of his men to select from a package containing knives, powder, tobacco, and cloth, a quantity equal to the usual Indian price for a horse. Wingenund, having waited in silence the return of the messenger, addressed the prisoner as follows:—

"Has the stranger a name in his tribe?"

"He is called Besha in the southern prairies."

"Besha dwells among the Crows. They have shed the blood of white men and Delawares in battle; his scalp belongs to those who have taken him."

The horse-dealer bowed in silence, and the youth continued.

"But the heart of the white chief is great; he will not take Besha's life, neither will he bind his limbs. Besha is free to go where he likes."

The horse-dealer stared as if he did not quite believe his ears; but Wingenund, without appearing to notice his surprise, proceeded.

"That is not all. Besha received a wound in defending Olitipa from the Washashe. The white chief's hand is open; it is quick to reward good deeds, and to punish bad ones; the presents in that package, of knives and cloth, tobacco and powder, are for Besha; he may return to the Upsaroka camp, and his friends shall not say that he comes with empty hands."

The deep-set eye of the horse-dealer gleamed with pleasure, as he fixed it on the welcome bale, and heard these words. His first movement was to rise from the ground, and place the right hands of Reginald and of Wingenund on his heart in token of gratitude; then turning towards the latter, he inquired, "Is there a dark cloud over the Upsaroka bride? Will the white chief kill her, or make her a slave?"

"Let Besha open his ears," replied the youth, earnestly, "and let not the wind blow away good counsel. The Washashe and the Upsaroka have taken captive two white men from this band; these have killed no red man; they have done no harm. If any hurt be done to them, or their lives be

taken, the Upsaroka bride shall be burnt before the next setting sun; but if they are sent back free and unhurt, she shall return to her husband the same hour, and a present four times as great as this shall be given to Besha."

Having thus spoken, the youth placed the package in the horse-dealer's hands, and made him a sign to go. Before obeying this hint, the latter whispered a few words to Bending-willow, in which he comforted her with the assurance that he would labour incessantly for her release; after which he departed towards the Crow camp, with a gait somewhat tottering and uncertain, from the joint effect of the weight of his burthen and the wound that he had so lately received.

We will now leave Reginald engaged in the sad, yet dear employment of comforting his betrothed, and striving, by a thousand suggestions, to relieve her anxiety respecting the fate of her beloved instructor, and her lover's friend. Neither will we follow War-Eagle and Baptiste in securing the important post which they had so unexpectedly won; but we will return to the Crow camp, where Mahéga had newly arrived with his prisoners, and where everything was in a state of alarm and confusion.

Great had been the panic consequent on the double defeat which they had sustained; nor had its effects been entirely removed by the successful

blow last struck by Mahéga, and the capture of the two white men. The Osage chief had lost all his warriors, with the exception of four, his baggage and ammunition were in the hands of the enemy, and he well knew that his only remaining chance of retaining the support of his allies, was in vigorously pursuing the success which he had so opportunely gained. The Crow chief, on the other hand, disheartened by the loss and disgrace which had befallen his tribe, and vexed beyond measure at the detention of his son's favourite wife, justly attributed both these misfortunes to an alliance which had brought no increase either to his power or his wealth.

Such was the state of parties when the council of the Upsarokas met to decide upon the fate of their prisoners. The debate being carried on in their own language, Mahéga was unable to gather the sentiments of the several speakers, and he declined to sit in the circle, but stood leaning against the outer post of the council lodge, his quick eye bent upon the countenance of each successive speaker, as if he would read there the purport of his harangue. One fierce and hot-headed warrior proposed that the prisoners should be instantly put to death, and a sudden attack be made with their whole force on the opposite hill, which would be easily recovered, and an abundance of plunder acquired. An older Indian next addressed the meet-

ing in a persuasive tone, that suited well the sharp and cunning expression of his countenance. He argued, that the Crows had derived no advantage, but rather loss and misfortune, from their alliance with Mahéga, and that it was their interest to make friends with the newly-arrived band, who were more rich and powerful; wherefore he advised that the lives of the prisoners should for the present be spared.

The debate was at its height, and the assembly apparently divided in opinion, when Besha entered the council-lodge, and sat down in the outer circle near to the entrance. All eyes were turned to him, as the report of his capture had already spread through the village, and his wasted appearance, as well as the bandages over his neck and arm, showed that he had been wounded in the late affray. After a brief silence, the chief desired that he would relate what had occurred, a command which the horse-dealer obeyed without hesitation.

Although not gifted with any orational powers, he was a shrewd fellow, thoroughly versed in all the wiles of Indian diplomacy ; and well aware, as a resident guest among the Crows, that his best chance of a favourable hearing was to frame his speech according to their interests, which happened in the present instance to tally with his own. In relating the events which had occurred in the

opposite camp, he exaggerated the strength and wealth of the enemy, dwelling at large upon the clemency shown to himself, and upon the desire evinced for peace; stating, in conclusion, that he was the bearer of a specific message, or proposal, to the great chief. At this announcement there was a general murmur of curiosity, and Mahéga bit his lip with vexation at his inability to understand what was going on.

At a signal from the chief, Besha proceeded to inform the council that Bending-willow, the bride of their favourite and absent war-leader, was now a captive; and he recounted faithfully the circumstances under which she had visited the white tent with him, and the terrible threats held out respecting her in the event of any injury being done to the white prisoners. The effect of this announcement was so great, that it was visible even to Mahéga; nor was he surprised when Besha explained to him, by order of the chief, that the council had decided upon sparing the lives of the white men, at least until the return of the war-leader and his band of braves, now absent on a foray into the country of the Black-feet.

Agreeably to this decision, Paul Müller and Ethelston were confined in a lodge adjoining that of the chief, under a Crow guard, to whom strict orders were given to prevent their escape, and also to protect them against any attempt on the part of

Mahéga or his followers. Besha was allowed to see them, and they learnt from him that their friends had been completely successful, and had re-captured the Great-Medicine of the tent, as well as the ammunition and baggage. He further informed them, that he would do all in his power to effect their release; adding a significant hint, that he should not be unwilling to receive tangible proofs of their gratitude.

The captives were, upon the whole, much comforted by this interview; and on his departure, Ethelston said, addressing his companion, “Reverend father, we have cause to be grateful for the intelligence communicated to us by this man, inasmuch as we expected no less than to be put to an immediate, and perhaps a cruel death. Yet, methinks, for a messenger of good tidings, he has the most uncomely and villainous countenance that ever I beheld.”

“I will not say that his face recommends him,” said Paul Müller, smiling; “albeit, the expression thereof may have been altered for the worse by the loss of an eye. I have seen him more than once before among the tribes bordering upon the Mexican frontier, and if my memory serves me, he bore the reputation of being a crafty and designing knave in his vocation; but I never heard him charged with cruelty, or thirst of blood.”

“What, then, do you think are the motives for

the friendly exertions which he professes to make in our behalf?"

"We will hope that they are partly owing to a grateful sense of the treatment he has experienced at the hands of our friend Reginald, and partly from the expectation of presents and rewards, which the Osage is no longer in a condition to offer. Meanwhile, we must solace ourselves in our captivity with the reflection, that my beloved pupil is safe under the charge of friends, upon whose fidelity and devotion we can fully rely."

Leaving the captives to comfort each other with these and other similar suggestions, we will return to Reginald Brandon, who forgot not, even in the enjoyment of Prairie-bird's society, to occupy himself constantly in devising plans for their liberation. In these he was warmly seconded by War-Eagle and Baptiste; but, after carefully reconnoitring the Crow camp, they agreed that it was too strong to be carried by open attack by their small party, especially as they had learnt from Besha, that the husband of Bending-willow, the son of the Great Chief, had just returned with his band, consisting of fifty chosen warriors, from a successful foray into the Black-foot country.

The wily horse-dealer was allowed, in his mixed capacity of interpreter and envoy, to pass from camp to camp; and as both parties were desirous of securing his co-operation, presents were liberally

heaped upon him, and his grey eye twinkled as he cast it upon the increasing pile of goods at the back of his lodge. "There will soon be enough to exchange for a hundred beaver-skins," said he to himself, "then Besha will look for some fine horses, and go towards the east."

While he was thus congratulating himself on his prospects of future wealth, a tall figure darkened the entrance of his lodge, and the young war-chief stood before him. "*White-Bull**" would speak with Besha," said the former in a haughty tone, adjusting with dignity the cream-coloured robe from which he took his designation.

"Let the young chief be seated," replied the horse-dealer, making at the same time a signal to one of his lads to offer food and a pipe to his guest.

White-Bull's first impulse was to refuse this hospitality, but he checked it, and having tasted a morsel, and emitted two voluminous puffs of smoke from the pipe, he turned to the horse-dealer, and said in a stern, deep tone, "Bending-willow is a prisoner in the white tent; Besha took her there, he must bring her back, for the heart of White-

* It was at one time currently rumoured among the trappers of the Rocky Mountains, that a Crow warrior had found and killed a white bison-bull, the skin of which he wore as a robe. The story, whether true or false, is adopted here, and assigned to the husband of "Bending-willow."

Bull is dark—there is no light or pleasure without her."

"The will of the bride was strong," he replied; "she would take no counsel from Besha; if he did not go with her, she would go alone, to consult the Medicine of the tent; Besha went with her that none might do her harm."

"The ears of White-Bull are not to be tickled by the songs of birds," said the young chief, fiercely. "Besha took her to the white men's camp, and he must bring her back before two suns have set, or his heart shall be cut out from his body."

"White-Bull knows that there are two white prisoners here, let him give them to Besha, and he will bring back Bending-willow before the sun is in the west."

"The white prisoners belong to the war-council," said the young man sullenly. "White-Bull cares not whether they live or die; but he wants his bride, whom the fool Besha led away to a place where she was caught like a beaver in a trap; if he does not bring her back within two sun-sets, the blade of this knife shall be red. White-Bull has spoken, and his words are not wind!" So saying, the violent youth passed with angry strides from the horse-dealer's lodge.

Besha now found himself in an awkward predicament, in endeavouring to extricate himself

from which, his first step was to consult the young chief's father, hoping that the latter would give his consent at once to release the prisoners for the recovery of the favourite bride. But the old man would not agree to the proposal, giving as his reason, that the council had resolved either to take the lives of the prisoners, or to make the enemy pay many horses and much goods for their ransom. "Besha has a tongue," continued the crafty old man. "He can speak with the white men; he can tell them that if the bride is given up their friends shall be returned, they will believe him, and all will be well."

Besha, though not particularly scrupulous in his morality, was startled at first by this proposal of treacherous and deliberate falsehood towards one who had spared his life, and had given him his liberty, besides loading him with presents; but his conscience being of an extremely elastic texture, he soon reconciled himself to the idea by the reflection that it was his best, if not his only chance of saving his life from the fury of the incensed White-Bull. He made no reply to the old chief; but, as he went away, the two rogues exchanged a look which satisfied them that they understood each other.

The horse-dealer proceeded without delay to the lodge where Paul Müller and Ethelston were confined, into which he was admitted by their

guards. Having explained to the Missionary that he was about to visit the white men's camp for the purpose of liberating him and his companion by the recovery of the captive bride, he desired to be furnished with a sign by which they would be induced to give her up without hesitation; for Besha, in his rambles on the Mexican frontier, had frequently met with the Spanish traders, and although he could not read letters himself, he knew how they were used for the interchange of communication at a distance.

Before giving any reply, Paul Müller explained the state of affairs to his companion, and asked his counsel.

"Methinks we should trust the fellow," said Ethelston, "for he has hitherto befriended us: but let us not write anything that can endanger the safety of Prairie-bird."

"I agree with you, my son," he replied, "and will write accordingly."

So saying, he took a small pocket-book from his breast, and wrote with a pencil upon a leaf of it the following words:

"Ethelston and Paul Müller send their affectionate greeting. The bearer says that he can liberate them if the captive bride is restored. Reginald Brandon will consult with those about him, and do what he thinks best. Let the safety of Prairie-bird, and of those who are now her

protectors, be the first object. Glad and thankful should we be to embrace our dear friends again; but we are well and cheerful here: in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death, we are in the hands of One who rules all for the best. Farewell."

Having received the paper, Besha lost no time in setting off to the opposite camp.

CHAPTER V.

DAVID MUIR AND HIS DAUGHTER PAY A VISIT TO COLONEL BRANDON.—THE MERCHANT BECOMES AMBITIOUS; HE ENTERTAINS PROJECTS FOR JESSIE'S FUTURE WELFARE, WHICH DO NOT COINCIDE WITH THAT YOUNG LADY'S WISHES.

WHILE the events related in the preceding chapters were passing in the Great Western Wilderness, the days of early summer glided smoothly on at Mooshaanee, uninterrupted by any incident worthy of record. Aunt Mary continued her round of busy occupation with her usual indefatigable activity. Never could there occur in the neighbourhood a case of sickness or of sorrow to which she did not hasten to administer the needful consolation; and in the town of Marietta her benevolent exertions were assisted by Jessie Muir, whose attendance in her father's store enabled her to gather all the current news from the numerous customers who frequented it.

“The Merchant” (for so David Muir was designated by all who did not wish to affront him) grew daily in importance and dignity. His speculations in trade had been, for the most part, suc-

cessful; and two or three of his suggestions for the improvement of the town had been adopted. A sharp attack of fever had subdued for a season the domineering spirit of Dame Christie; and David found himself not only respected by the neighbours, but even enjoyed the sweet, though brief delusion, that he was master in his own house.

Neither his pride, nor his increasing wealth interrupted, however, his close attention to business; and Colonel Brandon, finding that the affairs entrusted to him were managed with great punctuality and skill, treated him with corresponding confidence.

On a fine summer's morning, about a month after Ethelston's departure for the Far-West, the merchant's four-wheeled chaise stood before his door, drawn, not by a sorry pony, but by a strong horse, the condition and appearance of which betokened the thriving circumstances of the owner. Jessie Muir, wearing a very becoming bonnet, and a shawl newly arrived from England, had just cast a passing look into the oval mirror in the back-parlour, and was busily employed in giving directions respecting the contents of a parcel about to be placed in the seat of the chaise, while Henry Gregson was listening with ill-dissembled impatience to the repeated cautions given to him by

David as to his conduct during the brief absence which he meditated.

"Noo, Hairy," (for thus was the name of Harry pronounced in David's north-country dialect,) "ye maun be vera carefu' o' the store, and see that the lads attend weel to the folk wha come to buy, and that Jane stays aye amang the caps an' shawls and printed cottons, instead of keekin out o' the window at a wheen idle ne'er-do-weels in the street; and as for the last lot of Bohea, ye can truly say it's the finest that ever cam' to Marietta: I'm thinkin' the minister's wife will be fain to buy a pun' or twa. And, Hairy, mind that ye but the deil's in the lad! what are ye glow'ring at, over my shoulder, as if ye se'ed a wraith, an' no listening to what I'm sayin'?"

Here the merchant turned round, and his eye happening to fall upon a parcel of fire-irons so carelessly placed on an upper shelf, that they threatened the destruction of a pile of crockery below, he ordered the shop-boy to secure the offending tongs, and, turning to Harry, continued in a more complacent tone, "It's nae wonder, lad, that ye could na tak' your een off they irons; they had like to make an awfu' smash amraig the cups and saucers; I'm glad to see that ye're so canny and carefu' o' the goods."

Harry bit his lips, and made no reply, while the

merchant, who had already seen Jessie take her seat in the chaise, was preparing to follow, when he turned to the young man, and said in a low voice, "Ye'll no forget that the mistress will need her gruel at midday?"

"I will take care that it is not forgotten, and I suppose, sir, the glass of French brandy is to be put into it?"

"Glass o' French brandy, ye daft chiel," said the merchant, forgetting for a moment the prudential whisper; then resuming it, he added, "Wha talks o' glasses o' French brandy? Ye ken tho' that the mistress has no gotten her strength yet, and she said she would like just four spoonfu's o' brandy in the gruel to gie't a taste and keep the cauld out o' her wame. Ye ken the mistress' ain spoon in the tea-cup-board?"

"Yes, sir, I know it well," replied Harry, with demure gravity, adding, half-aloud, as his principal drove from the door, "and a precious gravy-spoon it is; before it is four times filled and emptied it will make the largest wine-glass in the store run over the brim, and the old lady's tongue go like a mill-wheel. Never mind, for Jessie's sake, I'll brew the gruel as stiff as my father's grog, and bear Dame Christie's scolds without complaint."

"He's a canny, douce lad, yon Hairy," said the merchant to his daughter, as they jolted leisurely

along the uneven but picturesque road that led from Marietta to Mooshanne, "and does na' care to rin about the toon like ither idle gillies, but seems aye content to min' the store; did ye see, Jessie, how he caught wi' ae blink o' his ee, the airns that were about to fa' amongst my best Wedgewood?"

Had the merchant not been occupied as he put this question, in guiding the wheels between sundry deep ruts and holes in the road, he could not have failed to observe the heightened colour that it brought into Jessie's countenance; for the maiden was conscious that at the moment referred to, Harry's gaze had been fixed, not upon the fire-irons or the Wedgewood, but upon her own comely self.

It is one of the peculiar properties and triumphs of love, that, not content with securing its own position in the human heart, it delights in unsettling and metamorphosing the tenants by which it was previously occupied. Under its wayward sway boldness becomes timidity, and fierceness is transformed into gentleness, while bashfulness is rendered bold, and simplicity has recourse to the devices of cunning !

Thus Jessie Muir, who was naturally of a frank open disposition, but who had a secret presentiment that her father would reject the suit of her lover if

it were now to be declared, acquiesced demurely in his observation respecting the attention shewn by Harry Gregson to the business of the store.

"Weel, a-weel," continued the merchant, "he's a gude lad, and no ill-faured neither; I'm thinkin' Jessie, that he and Jean will maybe fancy each other; they're aye thegither i' the store, an' the bit lassie might gae further and fare waur than by takin' up wi' Hairy."

This speech was too much for Jessie's equanimity; the coolness with which her father spoke of his servant-maid "takin' up" with her lover, stung her to the quick, and she replied tartly, "Father, I wish you would mind your driving among these holes and stumps, instead of talking about Jean and her idle nonsense. Indeed, father, that last jolt nearly threw me out of the chaise."

"Weel, Jessie, ye need na mak' such a pother about a stump mair or less atween Marietta and Mooshanne; and though I'll no say that my drivin' is like that of Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, ye need na fear that I'll coup the braw new chaise for a' that."

Jessie was well pleased to have turned her father's thoughts into another channel; and being a little ashamed of the momentary irritation to which she had given way, she now exerted herself to please and amuse him, in which she succeeded

so well that they reached Mooshanne in cheerful mood, and with wheels uninjured by hole or stump.

Colonel Brandon, seeing the merchant drive up to the door just as he, with Lucy and Aunt Mary, were about to sit down to dinner, went himself to the door, and, with the frank hospitality of his nature, invited him and his daughter to share their family meal. This invitation was no small gratification to the pride of David Muir, who had on former visits to Mooshanne regaled himself with Monsieur Perrot in the pantry. The boxes and parcels having been safely deposited, and the chaise sent round to the stable, Lucy aided Jessie to uncloak and unbonnet, and in a few minutes the party, thus increased, found themselves assembled at the Colonel's table.

" My worthy friend," said the latter, addressing his guest, " you seem to have brought an unusual variety of packages to-day; I suppose the greater part of them are for Lucy's benefit rather than for mine?"

" Maybe Jessie has brought a few things fresh frae Philadelphia for Miss Lucy to look at," replied David; " but the maist part o' what I hae wi' me the day, came late yestreen, by Rob Mitchell's batteau from St. Louis. There's a wheen letters and parcels frae Messieurs Steiner

and Roche, which will, nae doubt, explain the settlement o' the matter anent your shares in the fur trade."

"Are there not any other letters from Saint Louis?" inquired Lucy, colouring slightly.

"There's nane, my bonny young leddy," replied David, "excepting twa, aine frae auld Miller, to acknowledge the receipt o' the last ten barrels o' saut pork that I sent him, and anither frae Reuben Stiggs, wha keeps the great outfitting store for trappers, to order an early freight o' blankets, Bibles, religious tracts, scalp-knives, and whisky, for the Indian trade."

In spite of her disappointment, Lucy could not forbear smiling at the gravity with which the merchant enumerated this strange mixture of goods ordered for a warehouse, to which the missionary and the trapper both resorted for their respective supplies.

The dinner passed agreeably enough; and Jessie Muir having soon recovered from the diffident shyness by which she had been at first overcome, amused Lucy and Aunt Mary by her quiet but shrewd observations on persons and things in Marietta, while the merchant enjoyed, with evident satisfaction, several glasses from a certain bottle of madeira, which he knew to have been for some years deposited in his own warehouse.

As soon as dinner was over, the ladies retired

to Lucy's boudoir, where she examined the contents of the packages which Jessie had brought for her inspection, while Colonel Brandon looked over the letters and papers from St. Louis. These proved to be of considerable importance, as they announced that all the points in dispute with the other fur company had been satisfactorily arranged, and that his own shares, as well as those in which Ethelston's property was chiefly invested, had risen greatly in value. During the perusal of this correspondence the Colonel spoke from time to time familiarly and unreservedly with his companion. He had learnt from Lucy the attachment that existed between Henry Gregson and the merchant's daughter, and had formed an internal resolution to contribute to its successful issue by advancing to the young man a sum sufficient to enable him either to enter into partnership with the merchant, or to commence business on his own account; but it was not his intention to develope this scheme until he had spoken with the elder Gregson, wherefore he contented himself for the present with sounding the merchant in vague and general terms respecting the disposal of his daughter's hand.

" My good friend," said the Colonel, " now that we have despatched our business, it occurs to me that I ought to remind you of a circumstance which may not yet have entered your thoughts,

namely, that your daughter Jessie is grown up to be a very pretty, sensible, and discreet young woman, and that having no son of your own, you ought to seek for her a worthy husband, who might hereafter aid her in comforting the declining years of Dame Christie and yourself."

During this address the merchant fidgeted on his chair, and betrayed other evident symptoms of uneasiness; but he made no reply, and the Colonel continued: "I think I know of a young man who has long entertained an attachment for her; and, if I am not mistaken, Miss Jessie would be more likely to smile than to frown upon his suit. Feeling myself not a little interested in his future prospects, I should, if Mrs. Muir and yourself approve the match, willingly contribute, as far as lies in my power, to their comfortable settlement."

"Really, Colonel Brandon, ye're vera kind, I can no' fin' words to thank ye," stammered David, who seemed to have lost his self-possession; and before he could recover it so far as to make any distinct reply, Lucy came into the room; and taking the Colonel's arm, looked up affectionately into his face, saying "Dear father, you have given enough time now to business; come into my room and hear one of Jessie's Scotch songs. I have just been listening to one which was written, as she tells me, by Robert Burns; it is so simple and

so beautiful, she has promised to sing it over again for you."

The Colonel smiled, and followed his daughter, saying to the merchant as they left the room, "We will speak further on that subject the next time that we meet."

As soon as the little party was assembled in the boudoir, Colonel Brandon entreated Jessie Muir to fulfil her promise of singing again the song which had given so much pleasure to his daughter. Blushing slightly, Jessie complied, and sung, in a voice of much natural sweetness, and without accompaniment:—

" Oh ! wert thou in the cauld, cauld blast,
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea ;
 My plaidie to the angry *airt*,*
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
 Or did misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw ;
 Thy *bield*† should be my bosom,
 To share it a', to share it a'.

" Or were I in the wildest waste,
 Sae black an' bare, sae black an' bare ;
 The desert were a paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there :
 Or were I monarch of the globe,
 Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign' ;
 The brightest jewel in my crown,
 Should be my queen, should be my queen."

* "Angry airt," the quarter whence the angry wind was blowing.

† Shelter

The Colonel having bestowed not undeserved praise upon the taste and feeling with which Jessie had sung her simple melody, added, "Yet I do not remember these words among the songs of the Ayrshire bard. Lucy, you have often read to me from the volume of his poems which came from England; do you recollect having seen this song amongst them?"

"Indeed I do not," replied Lucy; "yet it is so full of his peculiar force of expression and feeling, that it is difficult to believe it to have been written by any one else."

"I have been told," said Jessie, "that this song was found among his papers after his death. This may be the reason why you have not seen it in your volume."

The conversation having once turned upon the subject of the writings of Ayrshire's immortal bard, whose fame was then spreading far and wide over the habitable globe, it dwelt for some time upon the attractive theme; and the tall pines were already beginning to cast their lengthened shadows over the lawn, ere the merchant remembered that Dame Christie might be "wearyin'" for his return, and perhaps scold him for exposing himself and his daughter to the perils of the Mooshanne stump-studded track in the dusk of evening. The chaise having been ordered to the door, David Muir put on his hat and cloak, while Jessie donned her bon-

net and shawl ; and a few minutes saw them jogging steadily away on their return to Marietta.

For some time neither broke the silence of the deep forest through which they were driving, for each had their own subject for meditation. Jessie, whose spirit was softened by the songs of her father-land, and had been touched by the gentle kindness of Lucy's manner towards her, looked steadily towards the west; and while she thought that she was admiring the gigantic hemlock pines, whose huge limbs now came out in bold relief from the ruddy saffron sky beyond, her musings blended in sweet, but vague confusion the banks of Allan, Doon, and Ayr, with those of the river beside her, and pictured the "Jamies," "Willies," and other "braw, braw lads" of Scottish minstrelsy, in the form of no less a personage than Harry Gregson.

She was roused from her reverie by the voice of her father, whose meditations had taken quite a different direction, as will be seen by the conversation that ensued between them.

"Jessie, it's a gae bonnie house, yon Mooshanne, an' the mailen's* the best in th' haill Territory."

"Indeed, father, it is a very pretty house, and most kind are those who live in it."

"Wad ye no' like to live in it yoursel, Jessie?"

* Farm-buildings.

"To say truth, father, I would rather live in a smaller house than I might call my own."

"But suppose ye might ca' yon fine house your own, what wad ye say then, lassie?" This inquiry was enforced with a significant poke from the merchant's elbow.

Jessie looked up in her father's face, and seeing that it was unusually grave, she replied, "Father, I do not understand what you are aiming at. I am very happy in our house at Marietta, and wish for none better."

"Ye're a fule," said the merchant, angrily. "I tell ye, Jessie, ye're no better than a fule: and when fortun' hauds oot her han' to ye, ye'll no' gang half-way to tak' it. Hae ye no' seen how oft Maister Reginald comes to our store, and hangs aboot it like a tod round a hen-roost?"

"Indeed, father, I have made no such remark; and if Master Reginald did often come to our store, it was for powder, or a knife, or some trifle for Miss Lucy, and not for any other cause."

"Hoot awa' wi' your pouther and knives, ye blind hizzie," said the merchant; "it was to see and speak wi' yoursel', and no' for any other cause."

"Father, I am sure you are mistaken; Master Reginald would never so far forget the difference in our rank and condition, and I should be very sorry if he did."

"What do ye mean, lass, about difference o' rank and condeetion? Are the Muirs no' as weel-born as ony lord or duke in the auld kintra? Do ye no' ken that my mother's father's sister was married to Muir of Drumliwhappit, an' that he was near cousin to the Laird o' Blagowrie, wha married the sister o' the Earl o' Glencairn? Rank and condeetion, indeed! as I tauld ye just now, ye're neither mair nor less than a fule, Jessie. Why, the Colonel spak' wi' me anent the matter this vera day, an' said that he'd do what lay in his power to mak a' smooth an' comfortable."

Jessie Muir was now, indeed, surprised; for she had hitherto imagined that the idea of Reginald Brandon having taken a fancy to her, was one of those crotchets which the merchant sometimes took up, and which he would then maintain with all the pertinacious obstinacy of his character; but she knew him to be incapable of a direct untruth, and was, therefore, overwhelmed with astonishment at the communication last made to her.

We should not faithfully portray Jessie's character were we to say that she experienced no secret gratification, when she learnt that her hand was sought by one possessed of so many advantages of person and fortune; but we should do her injustice were we not to add, that the sensation endured only for a moment; and then her heart reverting to Henry Gregson, she thought only

of the increased obstacles which would now interfere with their attachment, and she burst into tears.

"Dinna greet, lassie, dinna greet,"* said the merchant, surprised and somewhat softened by this unexpected emotion, and he muttered to himself, "There's no kenning the twists and krankums o' a woman's mind! I tell her that she's courted by a weel-faured young man, wi' the best prospects in the haill Territory, and she taks on to greet like a *skelpit wean*."†

After various ineffectual attempts to draw from her any explanation of the cause of her grief, he ceased to interrogate her, wisely resolving to consult Dame Christie on the subject, and they drove on in silence until they reached their home in Marietta.

As they entered the house they were met by Harry Gregson, who led the way into the parlour, where he placed in the merchant's hand a paper which had arrived during his absence, and which proved to be an extensive order for articles to be shipped for St. Louis on the following day.

Whilst David Muir ran his eye over the list, calculating the amount of profit which he might expect to realize from the whole, young Gregson, observing the tears not yet dry upon the Jessie's

* Cry or weep.

† Whipped child.

cheek, cast upon her a look of anxious affectionate inquiry, which seemed only to increase her confusion and distress."

"Father, I am tired," she whispered, in a subdued voice, "and will go to my room to rest." Having received his embrace, she turned towards the door, where Gregson presented to her a candle that he had lighted for her, and in so doing he took her hand and pressed it; she withdrew it gently, and, in reply to his "Good night, Miss Jessie," gave him in silence a parting look so full of mingled tenderness and grief, that his anxiety was no longer to be controlled, and he resolved to draw from the merchant some explanation of her agitation. Seeing that he had at length finished his careful perusal of the paper, he said, "I think, sir, that Miss Jessie looks very unwell this evening; has anything happened to hurt or alarm her?"

"Naething, naething, my gude lad, only I tauld her some news that ought to have made her blithe as a lavrock,* and she thought fit to wet her een wi' dool† anent it."

"That is strange, indeed," replied the young man; and he added, in a hesitating tone, "I hope, sir, you will not think me impertinent, as I take so much interest in all that concerns your family, if I inquire what was the nature of the good news that you communicated to Miss Jessie?"

* Lark.

† Sorrow.

“ Why, Hairy,” replied the merchant, sinking his voice to a confidential whisper, “ as ye’re a discreet cannie lad, that’ll no crack* about they things all ower the toon, I may just tell ye that Jessie—”

“ David ! David !” screamed a shrill voice from the room above, “ are ye gaun to haver* there the lee-lang night ?”

“ Comin’ this moment, Christie,” said the obedient husband, leaving the room as he spoke, with the air and countenance of one so thoroughly hen-pecked, that Harry Gregson, in spite of his anxiety, laughed outright; saying to himself, as many a lover has said before and since, “ How unlike is Jessie’s voice to that of her mother !”

* Gossip.

+ Chatter.

CHAPTER VII.

BESHA PURSUES HIS CAREER AS A DIPLOMATIST.—AN AGREEABLE TETE-A-TETE DISAGREEABLY INTERRUPTED.—THE STEPS THAT MAHEGA TOOK TO SUPPORT HIS DECLINING INTERESTS AMONG THE CROWS.

WE left Besha engaged in an attempt to liberate the bride of the young Crow chief, by proposing to Reginald and his party an exchange of prisoners.

On arriving at the camp he was allowed to pass by the sentries, and took his way up the hill to the tent of Prairie-bird. As soon as the object of his errand became known a council was held, consisting of Reginald Brandon, War-Eagle, Baptiste, Pierre, and Wingenund, and, having heard the proposal made on the part of the Crows, they proceeded to deliberate on the course to be pursued.

They could have no hesitation in agreeing to an exchange of prisoners, could that be effected upon equal terms, but the Crows insisted upon the return of Bending-willow, as a preliminary step towards the release of their prisoners, and to this Baptiste and Pierre were most strongly opposed, especially the latter, who had experienced on more

than one occasion the proverbial treachery of the Upsaroka tribe.

Reginald was disposed, with the fearless generosity of his nature, to be satisfied with binding them by the most solemn obligations, recognised by their customs, to release their prisoners on the safe return of Bending-willow, but his opinion was overruled by his companions; and the horse-dealer's mission wore a most unpromising aspect when he bethought him of delivering the note written by Paul Müller to Reginald.

The perusal of this effected an immediate alteration in the sentiments of the council, and the restoration of the captive bride was decided upon. She was seated in the outer compartment of Prairiebird's tent when Besha entered, accompanied by Reginald, to inform her of her liberation.

Pierre, who was still suspicious of some treachery, and who had some knowledge of the Crow language, placed his ear at the corner of the aperture with the intention of discovering any underplot that might be going forward.

Besha, however, was too crafty to be caught in such a trap, or else he did not intend to make Bending-willow the confidant of his real intentions, so he simply announced to her that she was free to return to her husband's lodge, and that the white prisoners were to be restored in exchange for her.

Shaking off the sadness by which she had been

of late overcome, she sprang to her feet, and her eyes sparkling with grateful joy, she pressed her hand upon Reginald's breast, then looking round, she pronounced distinctly the name of "Olitipa."

On hearing herself thus called, Prairie-bird came forth from her inner tent, and having learnt the intelligence that, by the restoration of her new friend, the liberation of Paul Müller was to be effected, she embraced the former and presented her with a necklace of coral. Bending-willow returned the embrace with affectionate earnestness, and was then led by Besha from the tent.

As they passed towards the stockade, Pierre, whose suspicions were not yet entirely lulled, and who felt a deep interest in the safety of Ethelston, came up to the horse-dealer, and whispered in his ear, "If the tongues of the Crows, or of Besha, are forked, if the white prisoners are detained or injured, many widows shall howl in the camp, and the tongues of the wolves shall be red with Upsaroka blood!"

The Prairie-Guide spoke these words in a tone of deep meaning, and Besha knew that he was not a man likely to utter an idle or empty threat; he answered accordingly, "If Besha lives, the prisoners shall return unhurt before the next sunset," and so saying pursued his unmolested way to the Crow camp.

While they were crossing the valley which sepa-

rated the two encampments, Reginald, War-Eagle, and Baptiste still lingered near the door of the tent, discussing the events of the day, and expressing their respective opinions as to the probable conduct of the Crows.

"What says Prairie-bird?" inquired Reginald, addressing the maiden, who had been a not uninterested auditor of the discussion.

"Has not the Crow chief," she replied, "given a faithful promise that on the return of the bride he would restore my father and his friend unhurt?"

"He has."

"What then is the doubt?"

"The doubt is, whether the word of the Crow can be believed? whether he may not still detain, or injure his prisoners?"

Prairie-bird mused for a few seconds, as if debating within herself the possibility of such falsehood; then raising her head, she said in a tone of emphasis, "Fear not: my father and your friend will return to us uninjured."

"I accept the omen, sweet prophetess!" exclaimed Reginald, cheerfully; "and will believe that their thoughts are honest and straightforward as you deem them, unless their conduct should prove the contrary; in that event," he added, turning to War-Eagle, "my Indian brother and

I will see what our own heads and hands can do to set free our friends."

The chief replied not; but the sarcastic smile that played over his dark features, showed how little he shared in Prairie-bird's opinion of Upsaroka faith.

Meanwhile, Bending-willow returned in safety to her lodge, where Besha presented her, with an air of triumph, to her impatient lord. The other wives and women retired while she related to him her adventures, and from the mingled laughter and caresses with which he listened to her narrative, it is probable that she confessed to him the motive that had induced her to seek the Medicine of the white tent.

As soon as she concluded, he desired one of his young men to lead before the lodge a favourite horse, swift, high-couraged, and strong, from the back of which he had killed, with lance and bow, many a bison cow. Placing the bridle of raw hide in the hands of the horse-dealer, he said, "Besha has brought back the Sweet-scented-willow to its bed, he shall not go away with empty hands. When he rides through the village the warriors shall say that his horse is fit to carry a chief; and if any speak to him bad words, let him tell them to beware, for White-Bull calls him brother!"

So saying, the young savage, who had now completely recovered his good humour, half-lifted, half-threw the astonished dealer upon the horse's back, and turned again into the lodge to renew his caresses to his recovered bride.

"All goes well!" thought Besha within himself, as he rode towards his own quarters, proving, with professional skill, the paces and qualities of his new steed. "All goes well! and this animal will fetch me two hundred dollars in the lower Arkansas country; few such are to be found there. I wonder where this Crow thief found or stole it? If I can manage with fine words to get a few more skins from this tribe, and a few more presents from the white men, I will join the summer return-train from the Black Hills, and make my way back towards the east.

Indulging in these honest and disinterested meditations, the horse-dealer arrived before his own lodge, where his Indian wife awaited his coming with a savoury mess of bison-meat and marrow; after despatching which he smoked his pipe, without permitting any reflections concerning the prisoners whose cause he had so shamelessly betrayed, to disturb his appetite, or his present lazy enjoyment.

It was fortunate for them that they had an advocate more honest and zealous in a quarter where they least suspected it. This was Bending-

willow; who, after showing to her lover-husband the coral necklace given to her by Prairie-bird, and repeating to him the kind treatment that she had experienced in the tent, entreated him to use his influence for the restoration of the prisoners.

This she was not able to effect, as he stated that they belonged to the great council, who would decide upon their fate, after consulting the Medicine; but she obtained from him a promise that he would in the meantime protect them from all chance injury, as well as from the violence of any personal enemy who might bear them ill-will.

The deliberations of the Indian tribes are, in fact, carried on in a manner more strongly resembling those of civilised nations than is usually believed; that is, a few leading men meet together, and arrange the plan of operations to be pursued, after which they convoke the grand council by whatever name it may be called, and insensibly lead its members to propose, second, and carry the measures previously agreed upon. Thus it was with the Crows upon the present occasion. The old chief of the band, as soon as he learnt the safe return of Bending-willow, sent for his son the White-Bull, whose rank as leader of the braves entitled him to be present at a secret council; two other warriors, of more advanced age and experience, were also admitted; and these four being

assembled, they entered upon their deliberations with a freedom of thought and speech such as could not have been consistent with the forms and usages of a public meeting.

It would be tedious to relate in order the various arguments that were adduced by the several speakers in turn ; suffice it to say, that the father of White-Bull, independent of his claim to authority as chief, happened to be the oldest man and the greatest rogue present ; all which concurrent advantages gave a preponderating influence to his advice. The result was, as might have been expected, its adoption by the unanimous consent of his three companions ; and, as the after-movements of the band were regulated by it, a brief sketch of its purport and objects will not be misplaced.

His counsel, stript of Indian imagery and ornament, was, that they should for the present detain the prisoners ; and in order to avoid the consequences of the violent ebullition of resentment which might be expected on the part of the White Men and Delawares, that they should instantly decamp, and marching towards the south and west by the most intricate and difficult passes, make their way to the neighbourhood of the district where Mahéga informed them that he had concealed his goods and stores. These it was their intention, of course, to appropriate, and afterwards to deal with their dangerous and haughty

possessor as might be found most expedient. Meanwhile it was certain that the allied band would follow their trail for the recovery of the prisoners, and if they did so, with their baggage and Prairie-bird's tent, the Crows had little fear of being overtaken, excepting when they chose to halt for the purpose; if, on the contrary, the allied band should divide, the chief knew that from the intimate acquaintance of his warriors with the localities, they would easily find means to attack and overcome the weakened party left in charge of the tent, and its wonderful mistress.

This outline of operations being settled, it was further agreed that the prisoners should be entrusted to the care of White-Bull, who made himself responsible for their security, and who was to lead the van of the retreat, while Besha was summoned, and ordered to explain to the Osage chief the proposed plan of operations, and that to him was to be assigned the honourable post of defending the rear of the march.

In consequence of all these preliminary arrangements, a formal council was summoned, at which they were proposed and agreed upon, with the sanction of the Medicine, and a treaty was entered into with Mahéga, by which he bound himself with his companions to fight faithfully for the Crows, and to make over to them one half of his goods concealed in the cache, on condition that they

should do everything in their power to recover for him the Great Medicine of the tent, and his baggage now in the hands of the Delawares.

These arrangements and agreements were no sooner completed than they were carried into execution with a speed, order, and noiseless silence peculiar to these roving tribes, whose fate is so often dependent upon the secrecy and celerity of their movements.

While these things were going forward in the Crow camp, Reginald sat by the side of Prairie-bird under the small cedar-tree in front of her tent. Being still somewhat stiff from the wounds and bruises received in the late attack, he gladly availed himself of that pretext for enjoying a few hours of repose in the society of his beloved, while he left the chief care of the defence of the camp to Baptiste and War-Eagle.

His eye wandered occasionally across the valley below, and scanned with an anxious look the opposite hill upon which the dusky figures of the Crows were seen moving to and fro between the lodges and bushes, until it returned to rest upon the lovely countenance of his companion. That countenance which was now lighted up by the parting rays of the declining sun, beamed with emotions too deep for utterance.

Her love for Reginald was not like the love so often found in the artificial world of society, a mere

preference, engendered, perhaps, by fancy, and nurtured by habit, accident, or mere congeniality of tastes, but a single absorbing passion, the intensity of which she trembled to acknowledge even to herself. All the poetry, the enthusiasm, the yearnings of womanly feeling in her nature were gathered into a focus, and nothing but her strong and abiding sense of religion prevented that love from being idolatry.

As her eye fell upon the recent scar upon his forehead, and the sling in which his left arm was enveloped, she remembered that twice already had his blood been shed in her defence, twice had her life been saved at the risk of his own. Tears of delicious gratitude, tears sweeter than any smiles that ever dimpled the cheek of joy began to flow, and half averting her face from her lover, she turned it thoughtfully towards the western horizon.

The orb of the sun had just disappeared behind the rugged and far-distant mountain range, whose towering and snow-clad peaks stood out in clear relief from the deep masses of cloud whose wavy edges still reflected his golden light. A mellowed haze wrapped as in a saffron mantle the nearer hills, whose irregular forms, some rocky and precipitous, others undulating and covered with dense forests of pine and cedar, formed the foreground of the magnificent evening landscape. A single star

glimmered palely in the twilight heaven, a fore-runner of the thousand glorious lights about to emerge from its unfathomed vault. To look up from nature to nature's God was the habitual process of Prairie-bird's mind, a habit resulting partly from the fatherly instructions of the Missionary, but chiefly from her constant study of the Scripture amid scenes calculated to impress its lessons most deeply upon her.

Such a scene was that now before her, and as the deepening shadows fell upon mountain, forest, and vale, a holier calm stole over the current of her thoughts, and imparted to her eloquent features an expression in which the sweet consciousness of reciprocated earthly affection was blended with adoring gratitude to Him whose everlasting name is Love.

The earnest and affectionate gaze of Reginald was still rivetted upon her countenance, when a gentle sigh fell upon his watchful ear. Taking her hand within his own, he whispered, "Is Prairie-bird sad?—Does any sorrow disturb her peace?"

Dropping to the earth those humid eyes so late upraised to heaven, she replied, in a hesitating voice, "Not sad, dear Reginald, but . . . afraid."

"Afraid! dearest; and of what? Nay, blush not, but tell me your cause of fear."

"Afraid of too much happiness, of too much

love. I tremble, and doubt whether my thoughts are such as God approves."

"Be not rash nor unjust in self-condemnation," said Reginald, in a chiding tone, while secretly delighted by a confession which his heart interpreted aright; "think you that the Creator who implanted these affections within us, and who has pronounced repeated sanctions and blessings upon the bond of wedded love, think you, dearest, that He can be offended at your love for one to whom you have plighted your troth, and who, albeit in many respects unworthy of such a treasure, has at least the merit of repaying it an hundred-fold!"

"Unworthy!" repeated Prairie-bird, in a tone of reproachful tenderness,—other words trembled upon her lips, but the instinct of maidenly reserve checked their utterance, and she was silent.

"Nay, if you like not the word, it shall be unsaid," whispered Reginald, gently pressing the hand which he held within his own; "and my whole future life shall be a constant endeavour to make it untrue. Let me, however, guess at the secret cause of your fear, and of the sigh that escaped you,—you were thinking of your dear fatherly instructor, and were afraid that he would not return?"

"Indeed my thoughts were not of him at the

moment," she replied, with earnest simplicity; "nor am I afraid on his account."

"Why, is he not yet in the hands of an enemy whose cruelty and treachery are proverbial? What if the Crow chief should, in spite of his solemn promise, refuse to give up his prisoners?"

"It cannot be," she replied gravely; "God will not permit such falsehood."

"You speak," said Reginald, "like one who has studied chiefly your own heart, and the precious book now lying at your side; but even there you may have read that the Almighty sometimes permits falsehood and wickedness to triumph upon earth."

"It is too true," replied Prairie-bird; "yet I feel a strong assurance that our friends will return to us in safety. I cannot tell whence it comes—whether from a dream sent in the watches of the night, or the secret whispers of some mysterious and unseen counsellor, but it brings hope, rest, and comfort to my heart."

"God forbid," said Reginald passionately, "that I should say anything likely to banish such sweet guests from so sweet a home. But if the Crow chief should be guilty of this treacherous act of falsehood, I will endeavour to inflict upon him a vengeance so signal, as shall deter him and his tribe from any future repetition of the crime."

"It is lawful," replied the maiden, "to recover

our friends by force or device, if they are detained by treachery; but remember, dear Reginald, that vengeance belongs not to our erring and fallen race; if the Upsaroka should sin as you expect, defeat, if you can, his evil schemes, but leave his punishment to the Great Avenger, who can make his latter days loathsome as those of Gehazi, or his death sudden and fearful as that of Ananias and his guilty spouse."

Reginald coloured deeply, for his conscience reminded him that on a late occasion he had used, in a discussion with War-Eagle, the same argument as that now applied with so much force to himself, and he felt ashamed of having forgotten, in the excitement of his own passions, a truth which he had laboured strongly to impress upon another.

"Thanks, dearest monitress," he replied, "for recalling me to my better self; would that you were always by my side to control my impatience and reprove the hastiness of my temper. Nay, I trust ere long that you will be always at my side; your father and instructor will return, and will unite us in those holy bands not to be severed by man. You will then leave the prairie and the tent, and come with me to a home where a second father and a loving sister claim a share in your affection."

"It shall be so," replied Prairie-bird in a low
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and earnest voice; “read my answer in the language of one who, like myself, was humble and friendless, but who, trusting in her God, found in a strange land a husband and a home.”

“Nay, read it to me,” said Reginald, anticipating her selection; “however beautiful the words may be, your voice will make them fall more sweetly on my ear.”

Prairie-bird opened the book, but she looked not on the page, for the words were treasured in her heart; and she repeated in a voice faltering from deep emotion, “Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.”

As she concluded these words, she looked up to the face of her betrothed with eyes beaming with truth and affection. The strong man was overcome; he could only utter a deep Amen. The consciousness that the trustful, guileless being now at his side had surrendered to his keeping the ark of her earthly happiness, mingled an awful responsibility with the more tender feelings that possessed his inmost soul; he felt what has been so truly described by a poet out of fashion and out of date,—that

" The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As are the concealed comforts of a man
Locked up in woman's love."

Then did he record a secret and solemn vow that he would guard his precious treasure with a miser's care; the stars began more brightly to twinkle in the sky, the watch-fires emitted through the deepening gloom a clearer ray; and as the head of Prairie-bird lightly rested upon her lover's shoulder, they gave themselves up to the delicious reveries suggested by the hour, the scene, and hearts overcharged with bliss.

The happy pair were suddenly aroused from their waking dream by the sharp crack of a rifle, the flash of which Reginald distinctly saw through the bushes on the side of the hill below them; a bullet whizzed close to his head, and a half suppressed cry broke from Prairie-bird.

" Speak love, speak!" he exclaimed in frantic alarm; " speak but one word to tell me you are not hurt!"

" I am not hurt," she replied; " God be praised that you are also unharmed! Nay, dearest, do not break from me." Here the report of fire-arms was again heard, mingled with the shouts and tumult of a sudden fray. " Our friends are on their guard! you are still weak from your late wound! Oh, Reginald, stay! I entreat—I implore!"

But he heard her not; the din of arms and the foul attempt at murder, directed, as he believed, against the life of his betrothed, had awakened the tempest within him; the wounded arm was released from its sling, and, with drawn cutlass in his right hand, he rushed down the steep slope of the hill with the reckless speed of a madman. We will now proceed to explain the cause of this sudden interruption of their *tête-à-tête*.

It has been already mentioned that Besha had been charged with explaining to Mahéga the arrangements and plans adopted at the Upsaroka council. No sooner had he done so, than the Osage chief, finding that the evacuation of the camp was to take place during the night, resolved upon striking, before they withdrew from the neighbourhood, one blow at the foes who had defeated and baffled him.

Too cunning to be deceived by the Crows, or to be misled by the flattery of Besha, he knew that as he had now no more presents to offer, his only chance of retaining any authority or influence with them was by such deeds of daring as should compel them to look up to him as a war-leader. This feeling, stimulated by his thirst for revenge, led him without hesitation to attempt a feat which, if successful, must render him the terror not less of his allies than of his foes.

As soon as the Horse-dealer had left him he

summoned his few remaining followers, and informed them that they must prepare to march during the ensuing night; he told them also that he was about to set forth himself on the war-path alone, and all that he required of them was to conceal themselves among the bushes fronting towards the enemy's camp, so as to cover his retreat in case of his being pursued from that quarter, and that he intended to return, if possible, on a horse.

The men listened with silent attention to their leader's orders, and retired without making either comment or reply. Mahéga then stripped himself of every ornament that could attract attention, and threw off his hunting-shirt and leggins, thrusting a brace of small pistols and a long knife into his waist-belt; and with no other covering than a light pair of moccasins on his feet, he stole out of the camp at a point which was not visible from the enemy's quarters.

Availing himself of every ravine and undulation of ground, he made a swift circuit in the distant prairie, and approached the Delaware camp on the north-eastern side, where, as has been before mentioned, it was protected by a precipitous cliff. He had observed a narrow valley in this direction, not more than half a mile from the base of the rock, to which the white men drove their horses for pasture; and as a view of it was commanded from the height, they were only guarded by a single man,

who drove them back in the evening to the camp. The man who happened to be on duty there was a hunter belonging to the band brought out by Pierre, a brave, and somewhat reckless fellow, who had been inured to all the hardships and risks of a mountain trapper's life.

The crafty Osage, having succeeded in obtaining the important advantage of seeing his opponent before he could be himself perceived, directed his movements accordingly. He might, perhaps, have succeeded in creeping near enough to shoot him, and have gained the shelter of his own camp before he could be overtaken ; but such was not his purpose. He had determined that the bullet now in his rifle should lodge in the heart of Reginald or War-Eagle, and no other life could satisfy his revenge.

Not more than a hundred paces from the spot where the unconscious sentry sate, with his face towards the Upsaroka camp, the valley made a bend, becoming at the same place narrower and steeper in its banks ; thither did Mahéga stealthily creep, and on reaching it found that he was not within sight of his enemy.

After waiting some time, during which he carefully noted every brush and hillock that might be made subservient to his projected plan, he saw feeding towards him a steady old pack-horse, whose scarred back and sides showed that he had carried

many a weary burthen over mountain and prairie. The Osage remarked also, that the animal had a long laryette of hide round its neck. As soon as he felt assured that it had passed the bend, and could no longer be seen by the man on guard, he caught the end of the laryette, and led his unresisting quadruped prisoner to a spot further up the valley, where some thick bushes offered him the means of concealing himself. Here he twisted the laryette firmly around the fore-leg of the horse, and ensconcing himself behind the largest of the bushes, patiently awaited the result.

As the shades of evening drew on, the hunter rose to collect and drive his horses to the camp. Having gathered those in the lower part of the valley, he afterwards came in search of those that had strayed beyond the bend. When his eye fell upon the old pack-horse cropping the long grass, and occasionally the younger shoots of the adjacent bushes, he muttered to himself, "The old fool hasn't sense to know summer from winter; there he stands, gnawing the twigs off the bushes, when he might be eating the best grass in the bottom."

As soon as he reached the animal whom he thus apostrophised, he laid down his rifle, in order to free the entangled leg from the laryette. While stooping for this purpose, a slight rustling of leaves caught his ear; and ere he could look round the fierce Osage sprang upon him with the bound of a

tiger. The unfortunate man strove to catch up his rifle, but the foot of the giant was upon it, a grasp of iron was upon his throat, and ere he could utter a sound or raise a hand, the knife of the savage was buried in his heart.

Having thus far succeeded in his plan, Mahéga dressed himself from head to foot in the clothes of his victim, taking possession at the same time of his knife and pistols, having first deliberately scalped him, and placed the scalp in his own belt, below the ill-fated hunter's shirt. When thus accoutred and attired, the Osage grinned with satisfaction, and proceeded to the next, and more dangerous portion of his enterprise.

His first step was to select and secure the best horse from those pasturing in the valley, which he bridled with the laryette already mentioned; and having slung the hunter's rifle over his shoulder, he mounted his newly-acquired steed, and began leisurely to drive the others towards the Delaware camp. As soon as he emerged from the valley he came in sight of the enemy's sentries and outposts; but the well-known wolf-skin cap, and elk-skin shirt, attracted no particular attention, and he rode deliberately forward until he reached a huge pine-tree, the shade of whose branches was rendered yet more dark by the deepening gloom of evening. Here he fastened his horse; and leaving the others to find their way as they best might, he struck

boldly into the thicket that fringed the base of the hill.

Conscious that he was now in the midst of enemies, and that his life must depend upon his own skill and address, he crept forward up the steep ascent, now stopping to listen for the sound of a footfall, now straining his eyes through the dusky shade in search of some light or object, by which to direct his course. Knowing every inch of the ground, he was soon able to distinguish the angle of the stockade, and at no great distance above it the white tent, partially lighted up by a fire, round which were seated Monsieur Perrot, Pierre, and several others.

As night drew on, and the surrounding scenery became involved in deeper gloom, the watch-fire emitted a stronger light, by which Mahéga caught, at length, a view of Reginald seated by the side of Prairie-bird. All the stormy passions in his breast, jealousy, hatred, and revenge, were kindled at the sight; and as soon as he thought the muzzle of his rifle truly aimed at his rival's heart, he fired. Fortunate was it for Reginald, that the light cast by the fire was flickering and uncertain, or that hour had been his last.

The savage, without waiting to see the result of his shot, which had alarmed the hunters and the Delawares patrolling near the spot, rushed down

the hill towards the tree where he had left his horse. Twice was his path crossed by an enemy; the first he felled with a blow on the head from the discharged rifle, and the second, which was no less a person than honest Baptiste himself, he narrowly missed, in firing a pistol in his face at so near a distance that, although unhurt by the ball, his cheek was singed by the powder.

Completely taken by surprise, the Guide fired into the bushes after the retreating figure of his unknown foe, and then dashed forward in pursuit; but the darkness favoured the escape of the Osage, who never paused nor turned again until he reached the spot where he had fastened the horse; then vaulting on its back, he shouted his insulting war-cry, in a voice that might be heard above all the mingled sounds of pursuit, struck his heel into the flank of the captured steed, and, unscathed by any of the bullets that whistled after him, reached the Crow camp in safety.

The Osage warriors looked with some surprise upon their chief in his unusual attire, but he briefly returned their greeting, and proceeded without delay to the lodge of the Upsaroka chief. A fire was burning there, by the light of which he recognised the old man seated in the midst, with his son White-Bull on his right, and Besha at some distance on his left. Mahéga had by this time thrown off the garments of the slain hunter, which

were slung across the horse. Leading the latter forward, until the light of the fire fell upon it, and upon himself, he stood a moment in an attitude of haughty and silent expectation. White-Bull and his father raised their eyes in surprise at the sudden appearance of their guest, and in involuntary admiration of his herculean figure, the fine proportions of which were seen to advantage by the ruddy glare of the blazing logs.

"Let Besha tell my brother he is welcome," said the old chief, cautiously; "and let him inquire whence he comes, and what he has to say."

"Mahéga is come," replied the proud Osage, "from a visit to the pale-faces and the Lenape women. His hands are not empty; the shirt, the leggins, the belt, the head-dress, and the horse of a white hunter he has brought as a present to the Upsaroka chief. If White-Bull will receive the *Medicine-weapon*,* the heart of Mahéga will be glad."

White-Bull and his father accepted the offered presents with every demonstration of satisfaction. The latter, again addressing Besha, desired him thus to speak :

* At the date of this tale the use of fire-arms was very little known among the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains; and in most of their languages, to this day, the words by which they express "a rifle," signify, usually, "medicine-weapon," "wonderful fire-weapon," "fire-tube," &c. &c.

"Mahéga forgets that all his goods are in the hands of his enemies—does he keep nothing for himself?"

The Osage made no reply, but drawing the recent scalp from his belt, and pointing to it, the knife still red with human blood, he smiled scornfully, and strode through the camp back to his own lodge. His purpose was effected; he had succeeded in his daring exploit, and although uncertain of the result of the shot fired at Reginald, he had regained some of his influence over the Upsaroka chief and his intractable son. Mahéga pondered over these things in his lodge, as he mechanically attached the scalp of his last-killed foe to a thong, on which were already fastened many similar trophies of his former prowess.

His musings were soon disturbed by the voice of Besha, who entered the lodge, bearing a sack of considerable dimensions, which he deposited upon the ground. "Mahéga is a great warrior," said he, greeting the Osage with something of the reluctant courtesy which a terrier shows to a mastiff, "his name will be heard far among the tribes of the Upsaroka nation. The Great Chief wishes to make his Washashe brother a present, three horses stand without the lodge to carry the followers of Mahéga on the path of the bison, or of the Lenapé."

The eye of the chief brightened with fierce

pleasure at this announcement, as two of his few remaining men were unhorsed; and he satisfied himself, by going to the door of the lodge, that the horses now presented to him were good and fit for service.

"That is not all," continued the horse-dealer; "White-Bull knows that the medicine-weapon cannot live without food, he has sent me to offer this bag to Mahéga."

As he spoke Besha opened the sack, and exposed to the view of the Osage, powder and lead sufficient for fifty or sixty shots, and half a dozen pair of strong moccasins, such as are made by the Crow women for their lords.

"The hand of the Upsaroka is open," said Mahéga; "tell him that his gifts shall not fall upon the ground; the lead shall be buried in the hearts of his enemies."

Besha, having given to the chief a few brief explanations of the hour and the arrangements fixed for the night-march, withdrew, and left him to communicate them to his followers.

We must now return to Reginald Brandon, whom we left engaged in the disagreeable and perilous task of pursuing an unseen enemy down the slope of a steep hill in the dark. His was not, however, a foot or a heart likely to fail him in such an emergency, and, reckless alike of obstacles or of the difficulties in his path, he continued his rapid

descent, and soon found himself among the glades and bushes whence the firing had aroused his attention. Advancing with his drawn cutlass still in his hand, he stumbled over something which he found to be the prostrate form of a man, and in whom he recognized by his dress, one of his own party. Finding that he could extract from him nothing but broken and muttered sentences about "the devil," and "the darkness," he hastened on until he reached a spot where he heard several voices in earnest conversation; these he found to be War-Eagle, Wingenund, and Baptiste; and he soon gathered from the latter all that he had to tell, which was, that having suddenly heard the crack of a rifle in the camp, and then a man rushing through the bushes in descending the hill, he had thrown himself in the way of the stranger, who after nearly blinding him by the discharge of a pistol in his face, had darted past him into the thicket below. "I fired after him," continued the honest Guide, "both pistol and rifle, but I scarcely think I hit him, for on reaching the edge of the timber, I could just distinguish a horseman crossing the prairie at full speed to the Crow camp; 'tis a bad business, but I fear there is worse yet behind."

"How mean you?" inquired Reginald.

"Why, I fear some foul play in our own camp;

the fellow who shot the pistol at me was one of our party."

"Impossible!" said Reginald; "I will not believe it."

"Neither would I, if I could help it," replied the Guide; "but dark as it was I could plainly see the fur-cap and elk-shirt upon him; whoever it was, he joined Mahéga on the prairie, for the Washashe shouted his cursed warwhoop aloud to insult us."

Wingenund here whispered a few words to War-Eagle, who replied, "Right, my young brother, let us visit the posts and the fires, we shall soon see who is missing."

While the chief, with the aid of Pierre and Baptiste, undertook this task, Reginald returned, accompanied by Wingenund, to the spot where he had stumbled over the wounded man. They found him seated in the same place, but his senses had returned, and with the exception of the severe bruises on the head, they were glad to learn that he was uninjured. He could give no account of what had passed further than that already given by Baptiste. He had been prostrated and stunned by a heavy blow from some one descending the hill with great rapidity; he also stated his impression that he had distinguished the dress of a white hunter.

The result of the investigation may of course be anticipated; the unfortunate owner of the wolf-skin cap was suspected of having plotted with Mahéga, and (after aiding him in an attempt to murder Reginald) of having gone off with one of the best horses to the Crow camp. Such was the conjecture of some, and if there were others who guessed more nearly at the truth, their opinions were for the present reserved; it being, however, impossible to make further inquiry until daylight, the different parties retired to their respective quarters, and Reginald again sought the tent to give to Prairie-bird an account of what had passed, and to assure her of his safe return. At the first sound of his voice she came forth, and listened with breastless attention to his brief narration. The watch-fire had been fed with fresh fuel, and its light falling upon her countenance, enabled her lover to see the intense anxiety which it expressed; a handkerchief, hastily folded like a turban, covered her head, and a dark Mexican mantle was thrown over her shoulders; her hand trembled in his, and a slight shudder passed through her frame as he mentioned the name of Mahéga.

"Nay, dearest," said Reginald, "I shall grieve, indeed, if the name of that hateful savage hath power so to move and disturb your peace. Fear him not: believe me, we shall yet defeat all his attempts, whether of hidden fraud or open force."

"There is no room, dear Reginald, for thoughts of fear for the future in my heart, 'tis already full, too full, of gratitude for the past; you are again by my side, safe and unhurt. Yet, methinks, I am sadly changed of late! A short time since, the report of the rifle, the arrow's hissing path, brought no terror to my ear, and now I tremble when I hear them! Will you not regret having chosen a coward for your bride?"

"Perhaps I may," said Reginald, "when the thirsty summer-grass regrets being moistened by the dew of heaven; when the watchful mother regrets that she has borne the infant by whose cradle she is seated; when the miser regrets having discovered an unsuspected treasure; and the weary traveller regrets having found a fresh spring amid the burning sands of the desert; then may I perhaps regret having chosen Prairie-bird to be to my thirsting heart its summer-dew, its firstling, its treasure, its fountain of exhaustless joy and love!"

Although it was not the first time that she had received the assurance of his affection, her ear drank it in with delight: the repetitions of Love have for his votaries perpetual freshness and variety.

"How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night!"

So says one of the fairest creations of the Great

interpreter of human passion; yet it is only to each other that these voices do so sweetly sound; to others less interested, their parlance is apt to seem dull and monotonous. Neither would a dinner of honey or Guava jelly alone, be more nauseous and disappointing to the appetite of a hungry man than a volume filled with love-letters, or love-speeches, to one in search of literary food. Duly impressed with this truth, we will spare any further detail of the conversation that passed between Reginald and his betrothed, and will content ourselves with relating that after more than one “Good night!” such as only lovers know, Prairie-bird retired into her tent, with her thoughts so absorbed in one object that she was scarcely conscious of the affectionate attentions of her faithful Lita, or of the watchful care of young Wingenund, who took his accustomed station at the entrance to the outer division of his sister’s canvass dwelling.

An hour before the dawn the wakeful youth arose and looked abroad; the pale and expiring fires of the opposite camp were still distinctly visible; but his practised ear missed the usual sounds of Indian life,—the hum of men, the cries of children, and the barking of curs. Having learnt the use of Reginald’s spy-glass, he took it down from the peg on which it was suspended, and examined the opposite hill. As the light of

day gradually advanced, and objects became more easily distinguishable, his suspicions became confirmed, and he resolved no longer to delay communicating them to War-Eagle. He found the chief seated at the door of his lodge, in an attitude which he at first mistook for slumber, but it proved to be one of deep meditation; for, on the youth's approach he looked up, and said, in the gentle tone in which he always addressed his beloved brother,

“Wingenund is a-foot before the sun; have his ears or eyes been open during the night?”

“They have,” said the youth gravely; “and the words that he brings to his brother are not good.”

“The Wolf-cap hunter is gone to the Upsaroka camp; that is bad news: is there any worse?”

“Wingenund knows nothing of the Wolf-cap hunter; but the Upsaroka camp is like the village of the Lenapé on the prairies of the east; there remains in it neither man, nor woman, nor child!”

War-Eagle sprang upon his feet, and hastily desiring Wingenund to summon Reginald, Baptiste, and Pierre to council, he descended the hill to the spot where his horses were fastened, and throwing himself upon the back of the swiftest, he galloped at full speed towards the opposite camp. As he approached it, he began to suspect that its apparent desertion might

be only a manœuvre to draw his party into an ambush, wherefore he wheeled his horse, and made a circuit round the base of the hill, at such a distance as to be secure from the arrow or ball of any marksman hidden among the bushes. As he gained a spot whence the expanse of prairie was open to his view towards the south-west, he saw a body of horsemen retreating rapidly in that direction ; they were already several miles from the camp, and he rightly conjectured them to be the rear-guard of the retiring enemy.

The main-body had marched early in the night, and only a score of the best mounted had been left to walk up and down by the fires, to talk aloud, and thus to prevent any suspicion of their movements from entering the Delaware camp.

Vexed and disappointed, the chief returned to his party, which he found in confusion and dismay, from their having just discovered the body of the unfortunate Wolf-cap hunter, one of his companions having visited the valley before mentioned, in search of the missing horse and laryette !

The mystery was now cleared up, and the truth flashed upon them that Mahéga, dressed in the clothes of their slain comrade, had actually come within their posts, and, after a deliberate attempt to shoot Reginald, had singed the beard of Baptiste, knocked down another of their party, stolen

one of their best horses, and escaped in triumph to his camp !

It may well be imagined how such a complication of injury and insult aggravated the hatred which they already entertained towards the Osage. Yet were there many among the rough and hardy men present, who could not prevent feeling a secret admiration of his daring and successful exploit.

CHAPTER VIII.

WINGENUND DEVISES A PLAN FOR THE LIBERATION OF HIS FRIENDS, AND SEEKS TO OBTAIN BY MEANS EQUALLY UNUSUAL AND EFFECTIVE THE CO-OPERATION OF THE ONE-EYED HORSE-DEALER.—A FURTHER MARCH INTO THE MOUNTAINS.—WINGENUND PAYS A VISIT TO HIS FRIENDS, AND THE LATTER MAKE ACQUAINTANCE WITH A STRANGE CHARACTER.

IT was about a week after the events related in the preceding chapter, that, in a deep romantic glen, apparently locked in by impassable mountains, there sate a hunter busily engaged in changing the flint of his rifle, it having just missed fire, and thereby lost him a fine chance of killing a bighorn, or mountain sheep; his countenance expressed little of the disappointment which would have been felt by a younger man on such an occasion, and its harsh, coarse features would have led any observer to believe that their possessor was habituated to occupations less generous and harmless than those of the chase.

As he fixed a fresh flint into the lock of his rifle, he hummed, or rather grunted, in a low tone, a kind of chaunt, which was a mixture of half a

score different tunes, and as many various dialects, but from the careless deliberation with which he went on with his work, it was easy to perceive that his mind was otherwise occupied.

Whatever might have been his reflections, they were suddenly interrupted by a hand laid upon his shoulder, which made him start as if he had been stung by a serpent. Springing to his feet, and instinctively dropping the muzzle of his rifle to the breast of his unexpected visitor, he exclaimed, after a momentary pause, "Does Wingenund come as a friend or an enemy?"

"Neither," replied the youth, scornfully. "Wingenund has no friendship for a forked tongue; and if he had come as an enemy, Besha would not now have been alive to ask the question; 'twas as easy to shoot him as to touch his shoulder."

"For what then is he come?" inquired the horse-dealer, who, although somewhat abashed at this reproof, was not disposed to endure the tone of superiority assumed towards him by the young Delaware.

"He is come to speak to Besha, and then to return; this is not a place to throw away words and time."

"Indeed it is not, for Wingenund knows that his enemies are within hearing of a rifle-shot."

"There may be other rifles nearer than Besha thinks," replied the youth, drily. "Wingenund is

not a bird ; wherever he goes his friends can follow him."

The horse-dealer cast an uneasy glance around, and muttered half-aloud, " If Wingenund is not a bird, I know not how he came to this place unseen by the Upsaroka scouts, who are abroad in every quarter ? "

To this Wingenund deigned no reply, but entered at once upon the business upon which he had come. As he explained his proposal the single eye of his auditor seemed to dilate with unfeigned astonishment, and at its conclusion he shook his head saying, " It cannot be ! the mad-spirit has entered my young brother's head. Besha would do much to serve his friends, but this would hold a knife to the cord of his own life ! "

" The knife is there already," said the youth, sternly ; " Besha has told lies to Netis and to War-Eagle, and unless he makes good his first words, their knife or bullet shall find him on the mountain or in the wood, or in the midst of the Upsaroka camp."

For an instant Besha was tempted to rush upon the bold speaker and trust the issue to his superior strength, but the quiet eye of the young Delaware was fixed upon him with an expression so fearless and resolved, that he involuntarily quailed before it, and as he was endeavouring to frame some further excuse the youth continued in a tone of voice less stern, " Let Besha's

ears be open, it is not yet too late; if he chooses to be friends with Netis, Wingenund can tell him some news that will be good for the person whom he loves best."

"And who may that be?" said the horse-dealer, doubtless surprised at the youth's pretending to a knowledge of his affections.

"Himself," was the brief reply.

The horse-dealer's eye twinkled with a comic expression, and a broad grin sat upon his countenance. "Supposing that my young brother's words are true, what is the good news that he has to tell?"

"If the white prisoners are given back unhurt to their friends, the lodge of Besha shall be more full of gifts than any lodge on the banks of the great southern river;* if not, the mountain wolves shall gnaw his bones before the change of another moon: let him choose for himself."

"My brother's words are big," replied the horse-dealer, striving to overcome the effect produced upon him by the threat of the Delaware youth. "The tongues of women are very brave; if the Washashe tell the truth, not many summers have passed since the Lenapé were a woman-people."

The blood of the young chief boiled within him at this insulting allusion to an era in the history of his tribe which has already been explained to the

* The Arkansas.

reader, and had he followed his first fierce impulse he would have instantly avenged the affront in the blood of the speaker, but he never lost sight of the object for which he had so long sought an interview with the horse-dealer, wherefore he controlled his rising passion, and replied, "Wingenund comes with this message from those who not many days ago drove the Washashe and the Upsaroka from their strong camp : Besha may judge whether they are women or warriors."

The horse-dealer felt, if he did not own, the justice of the reproof; he knew also that the greater portion of the coveted goods were in the possession of War-Eagle's party, and he was willing enough to conciliate them, provided he could ensure a safe retreat from the anger of the Crows, in the event of his intrigue being discovered by them.

Moved by these considerations, he said, in an undecided tone, "My young brother must not forget that the edge of the knife is on the cord of his life ; if Besha agrees to his proposal, and the Crows discover him, he will be torn in pieces like a wounded elk among wolves."

"The life of Wingenund is like the breath of the mountain breeze," answered the youth ; "it is in the hands of the Great Spirit, to move and send it whither he pleases. Let Besha taste this black-water," he added, drawing from his belt a small bottle, "it is very wonderful."

The horse-dealer took the phial, which contained a strong, and not very palatable mixture, which had been borrowed by Wingenund from his sister's chest of medicine; but he declined tasting it, shaking his head in a manner that gave the youth to understand that he suspected something of a hurtful or poisonous nature.

"Let not Besha be afraid," said the youth, scornfully; "the tomahawk and the rifle are the death-weapons of the Lenapé, they war not with bad-waters!" and as he spoke he drank a portion of the dark and distasteful liquid.

It would now have been held, according to Indian custom, an act of unpardonable cowardice in Besha had he any longer hesitated to taste the pledge, and whatever doubts or scruples he might in secret have entertained, he concealed them, and drank off the remaining contents of the phial.

As soon as he had swallowed them the youth, pointing up to the sky, said, with much solemnity, "Now Wingenund and Besha are before the Great Spirit, and they must beware what they do. This dark-water was given into their hands by the Medicine of the white tent; it is made up by Prairie-bird from a thousand unknown herbs; it is harmless to the good, but it is poison to the forked tongue! Has Besha ever heard of the sickness which makes the skin like a honey-comb; which spares neither woman, warrior, nor child; and in

the course of half a moon turns a powerful tribe into a feeble and exhausted band?"

"He *has* heard of it," replied the horse-dealer, trembling from head to foot at this allusion to that *fell disease*,* which had already begun its fearful ravages among the Indian nations, and has since fulfilled to the very letter the description given of it by the Delaware youth. Its origin and causes were unknown, its cure beyond their skill; it is not therefore to be wondered at if they looked upon it with a mysterious dread.

"Yes," continued Wingenund, "if truth is on the lips and in the heart of Besha, the medicine-water will be good for him and make him strong. If he thinks of falsehood, and lies spring up in his heart, but he overcomes the bad spirit within, and treads it under his foot, then will the medicine-water give him pain for a short time, but he will recover and be stronger than before; and if his lips and heart continue full of deceit, diseases and sores shall come so thick upon his skin that he shall die among these rocks, the hungry wolf and the turkey-buzzard shall refuse to come near the polluted carcase."

Such, or nearly such was the warning threat which the youth held forth in the bold and figurative language of his tribe; and although Besha could not with justice be called a coward, and was

*Small-pox.

superior to many of the superstitions of the Indian nations, still he had heard such well-authenticated accounts of the miraculous power of the Great Medicine of the tent, that the words of Wingenund produced all, and more than all, the effect he had anticipated.

"It shall be done," said Besha, in a subdued tone; "let Wingenund tell Olitipa that the lips and the heart of her friend will be true, and let him desire her to speak to the Great Spirit, that the medicine-water may not hurt him. Besha will be true; if the Crows discover and kill Wingenund, the hands of Besha shall be clear of his blood."

"Let the words of Wingenund remain in Besha's ears; let his tongue and his path be straight, and the hearts and hands of the Lenapé will be open to him. At two hours after nightfall * Wingenund will be here again."

So saying, the youth turned; and darting

* It has before been mentioned that the division and notation of time vary extremely in the Indian tribes; those who have had much commerce with the Whites have coined words answering to what we denominate hours; but the tribes of the Far-western prairies usually express the successive periods of the night by resting the cheek upon the hand in a recumbent posture, and then, holding up the fore-finger and thumb in the form of a crescent, they shew, by the number of motions which they make in pointing to the sky, the number of hours or watches after nightfall which they wish to indicate.

through some low bushes, clambered up the steep and rocky bed of a mountain-torrent with the activity of a mountain-cat.

Besha followed with his eyes the light form of the young Delaware, until it disappeared behind a tall cliff that projected so far across the narrow gorge as completely to hide its existence from the observation of any one traversing the valley, while its rugged and precipitous front might have deterred the boldest hunter from attempting the passage. The horse-dealer then shouldered his rifle, and returned slowly to the Crow camp, distant about a mile, revolving as he went along various schemes for ensuring the gratitude of the Delawares, without forfeiting the friendship of those with whom he was now allied.

Wingenund had rightly estimated the probable nature and quality of his reflections, and sundry sharp twitches which he felt in his stomach served to remind him of the dangerous liquid which it contained. Warned by these sensations, he made up his mind to obey the Great Medicine of the tent, and for the present, at least, to be faithful to the promise made to Wingenund.

The Delaware youth pursued his way up the rough and craggy gorge until he reached a cave that he had noticed on his descent as likely to afford shelter and a secure retreat. Here he stopped; and ensconcing himself in a dark recess,

whence he could, without being himself discovered, see any one passing before the aperture, he threw himself on the ground, and drawing from his belt a few slices of dried bison-meat, he made his frugal meal, and quenched his thirst from a streamlet that trickled down the face of the rock behind him. While resting himself, he indulged in hopes and reveries suited to his enthusiastic nature; he was now engaged in an enterprise such as he had often heard recorded in the songs of the Lenape warriors; he was about to trust himself alone in the midst of a hostile camp, and to risk his life for the liberation of his early benefactor and the friend of his adopted brother; he felt the spirit of his fathers stir within his breast.

“If I escape,” said he to himself, “they shall escape with me; and if I die, I will not die alone, and the name of Wingenund shall not be forgotten among the warriors of his tribe.”

In these and similar meditations he beguiled the hours until darkness overspread the earth, and the time of the appointed rendezvous drew nigh; then, once more emerging from the cave, he picked his way cautiously among the rocks, and at length found himself at the spot where he had parted from Besha. Having purposely concealed his rifle in the cave, he was now armed only with a knife and a small pistol, which he carried in his belt.

The night was cold and boisterous; dark clouds hung around the mountain-peaks, and chased each other in rapid succession over the disc of the moon, while a fitful gust of wind swept down the rocky glens, whistling as they passed among the branches of the scathed pines which were thinly scattered in that wild and desolate region.

He had not waited long when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and straining his keen sight to its utmost power, he recognised Besha, who came not alone, but accompanied by another man.

Although this was an addition to the company that he did not expect, the youth came fearlessly forward, his quick apprehension suggesting to him that if treachery had been intended the horse-dealer's companion would have been concealed. After exchanging a sign of recognition, Wingenund led the way to a deep recess which he had noted in a rock at no great distance, where they collected and kindled a few sticks of withered juniper and sage, which supplied them with warmth and light without rendering the place of their colloquy visible from the valley below.

By the light of the fire Wingenund observed with surprise that the horse-dealer's companion, a lad of nearly his own size and stature, had only one eye, the cavity of the other being covered with a patch of cloth; his complexion was of a hue

so swarthy, that it evidently contained an admixture of the negro race; and his hair, though not woolly, was coarse, long, and matted, differing entirely in its texture from that of the tribes of purely Indian blood. He was wrapped in a tattered blanket, and stood apart, like one conscious of his inferiority of station. To account for his appearance without entering at length into the explanations given by the horse-dealer to Wingenund, it will be sufficient to state that the latter had proposed to enter the Crow camp in a female dress, and to find an opportunity, as an inmate of his lodge, for communicating with Paul Müller and Ethelston.

As soon as Besha once made up his mind to forward the scheme, he resolved to do so with as little risk of discovery as possible. Happening to have in his lodge a slave, a captive taken in a horse-stealing skirmish among the Comanches, who was nearly the same age as Wingenund, he thought that the youth might personate him more easily than he could imitate the gait and appearance of a woman.

Many were the jokes among the Crows about the one-eyed Besha, and his one-eyed slave. The latter had lost his eye by the point of an arrow, in the same skirmish which threw him into Besha's power; and being a cunning and dexterous lad, he soon grew into favour with his new master, who

frequently employed him as a spy, and found him extremely useful in stealing, marking, and disguising horses for him.

Wingenund saw at once the drift of Besha's project, and they lost no time in carrying it into effect. The exchange of dress was made in a few seconds, and the horse-dealer then drew from his pouch a small bladder containing ointment, with which he stained the youth's hands and face, fastening at the same time a patch over his left eye. Wingenund then desired Besha to walk up and down, and speak with the lad, that he might carefully note his movements, and the intonation of his voice. This observation he continued for some time, until he thought himself tolerably perfect in his lesson. There remained, however, one point on which he still felt himself very insecure against detection. On his explaining this to Besha, the latter grinned, and drawing from under his vest a head-dress of false hair, ragged and matted as that of his slave, he placed it on the head of Wingenund. The youth felt his disguise was now complete ; and retaining his own knife and small pistol in his belt, threw the tattered blanket over his shoulder, and prepared to accompany Besha to his lodge.

The latter having instructed the slave to keep himself concealed among the rocks for a few days, and having provided him with a small bag of provisions, returned slowly towards the Crow camp, giv-

ing to his young companion by the way such hints as he deemed necessary for his safety. Fortunately for Wingenund, the lad whom he personated was known by the Crows to be ignorant of their language, so there was no great risk of his being betrayed by his speech.

As they picked their way slowly along the base of the rugged hills which frowned over the valley, they came to a spot where a few stunted pines threw a darker shadow across their path. To one of these was attached a horse, which Wingenund unfastened by desire of Besha, and led it after him by the halter.

As they reached the outposts of the camp Besha was addressed by several of the sentries, to whom he explained his night expedition, by informing them that he had been with his slave to recover a horse that had strayed. They were perfectly satisfied with this explanation, it being of very frequent occurrence that both master and man returned by day and by night with horses that they had "recovered;" the latter word being in the Crow dialect almost, if not quite, synonymous with "stolen."

The lodge of Besha was pitched next to that of White-Bull, in which Ethelston and Paul Müller were confined. His entrance caused no disturbance amongst its slumbering inmates; and Wingenund, fore-armed with the requisite local information, tied up the horse beside its fellows; and

nestling himself into his allotted corner, laid himself down to rest as composedly as if he had been in his usual quarters in the outer division of his sister's tent.

While Wingenund was thus carrying his project into effect, his friends fulfilled the intention they had formed of marching further into the mountains.

"Dear Prairie-bird!" said Reginald, as they walked together in front of her tent, "I fear you must be much fatigued by this last march. I never could have believed that a horse, bearing a female rider, could have crossed that rocky pass by which we entered this valley."

"The horse deserves more praise than the rider, Reginald; and Nekimi seemed quite aware that his master attached a higher price to his burthen than it was worth, for he put his feet so safely and gently down, that I need not have feared his slipping, even had he not been led by one yet more gentle and careful than himself."

"It was, however, a severe trial, Prairie-bird," replied her lover; "for you remember that Lita's mule stumbled, and nearly fell with her over that fearful precipice! but Nekimi is unmatched for speed and sureness of foot, and is of so generous and affectionate a nature that I love him more than I ever thought I could have loved a quadruped. When we return to Mooshanne, he shall be repaid

for all his faithful service; warm shall be his stable, soft his litter, and his beloved mistress shall sometimes give him corn with her own fair hand, in remembrance of these days of hardships!"

At the mention of his home, the cheek of Prairie-bird coloured with an emotion which that subject never failed to excite. Reginald observed it, and said to her, in a half-jesting tone, "Confess now, dearest, have you not a longing desire to see that home of which I have so often spoken to you?"

"It appears to me so like a dream, that I scarcely dare let my thoughts dwell upon it! But your sister, of whom Wingenund told me so much, I hope she will love me?"

Reginald bent his dark eyes upon her countenance with an expression that said, as plainly as words could speak it, "How could any one see thee, and fail to love thee!" Then turning the conversation to Wingenund, he replied, "Two days have now elapsed since your young brother went upon his dangerous expedition; I begin to feel most anxious for his safety."

"With grief I saw him go, for even if he succeeds in seeing and speaking with the Black Father, I cannot tell what advantage will come from it."

"They may perhaps devise some scheme for escape, and will at all events be comforted by the assurance that their friends are near and watchful.

Three several times on the march hither had we made our plans for attacking the camp, and rescuing them, but the hateful Mahéga was always on his guard, and had posted himself in such a manner that we could not approach without incurring severe loss. War-Eagle has himself owned that the Osage has conducted this retreat with wonderful skill. What a pity that so great a villain should possess such high qualities!"

"If he were not in the camp of the Crows," said Prairie-bird, "my beloved father, and your friend would have been set free long ago; cruelty and revenge are his pleasures, and his hand is ever ready to shed blood."

"He will doubtless do all in his power to prevent their liberation; and if his malignant eye should detect the presence of Wingenund, he would represent the brave youth as a spy, and urge the Crows to destroy him."

"I trust much to Wingenund's skill, but more, oh! how much more, to the protection of Him, at whose word the strongest bars and bolts are broken, and the fetters of iron fall from the limbs of the captive!"

"What a strength and support must it be to you, dearest Prairie-bird, thus habitually to look up to heaven amid all the trials and troubles of earth!"

"How would it be possible to do otherwise?"

she replied, looking up in his face with an expression of innocent surprise ; “ Can any one look upon the flowers of the prairie, the beauty of the swift antelope, the shade of the valleys, the hills and snow-clad mountains, the sun, the moon, and the thousand thousand worlds above, and yet not worship Him who framed them ? ”

“ I grant you, dearest,” he replied, “ that no reasonable being could consider those things without experiencing the emotions that you describe, yet many, very many, will not consider them ; still fewer are there who refer the thoughts, actions, and events of daily life to an ever-present, overruling Providence.”

“ Surely they can never have read this book,” she said, pointing to the volume which was her constant companion ; “ or they must feel ever grateful for past mercies, present benefits, and the blessed promises of the future revealed in it ! ”

For a moment Reginald cast his eyes upon the ground, conscience reminding him of many occasions on which he had been led by temptation and carelessness to wander from those ordinances and precepts of religion which he respected and approved ; at length he replied, “ True, my beloved, but the human heart is a treacherous guide, and often betrays into errors which reason and revelation would alike condemn.”

“ It may be so among the cities and crowded

haunts of men, of which I know nothing beyond what I have read, and what the Black Father has taught me; yet I cannot understand how a loving heart can be, in such cases, a treacherous guide. Is it not sweet to serve one whom we love on earth, to think of him, to bless him, to follow where he points the way, to afford him pleasure, to fulfil his wishes even before they are expressed! If such feelings be sweet and natural towards one frail and imperfect as ourselves, why should the heart refuse to entertain them towards the one perfect Being, our ever-present Benefactor, the Fountain of Love?"

Again Reginald was silent, the impassioned eloquence of her eyes told him how her heart overflowed with feelings but faintly shadowed in her simple language; and he desired rather to share than to shake her creed. Why should he tell her, that in spite of all the incentives of hope and gratitude, in spite of all the arguments of reason and the truths of revelation, the great majority of the so-called Christian world pursued their daily course of business or amusement as if the present were the substance of life, and Eternity a dream? Reginald felt his own heart softened, purified, and exalted by communion with the gentle being at his side; the cares and troubles of life might perhaps disturb at some future time the current of her lot, but her faith was built upon a Rock that

would not be shaken, and his spirit already sympathizing with hers, experienced a new and delightful sensation of happiness.

He might have indulged longer in this blissful reverie, had not his ear caught the sound of an approaching footstep; he turned quickly, and recognising the light form of Wingenund, exclaimed, “ See, Prairie-bird, our dear young brother safely returned ! May all your other hopeful anticipations be as happily realized ! Speak, Wingenund ; let us hear how you have sped in your difficult and dangerous mission ? ”

Instead of giving the youth’s narrative in his own words, we will resume the thread of his story where we left it, being thus enabled to relate various particulars which his modesty induced him to omit.

At the first dawn of day he looked round the horse-dealer’s lodge, and made a survey of its inmates. In the centre lay Besha himself, and by his side a squaw from one of the southern tribes, who had been the companion of his rambles and expeditions for many years. Beyond them there slept, or seemed to sleep, a youth, whose appearance indicated that he also belonged to a southern clime, and that some Mexican blood ran in his veins ; his features were finely formed, his complexion darker than that of a northern Indian, and a short mustachio began to shade his upper lip ;

his eye was small, but piercing, and black as jet, and scarcely was the light sufficient to render distinguishable the objects in the lodge ere his quick gaze fell upon Wingenund, with an expression that convinced the latter that the plot had been confided to him. These were the only inmates of the lodge, which was filled with various indications of its owner's success in trade, packages and bales being piled therein to a considerable height.

Agreeably to the plan preconcerted by Besha, his wife invited Bending-willow to come to her in the course of the morning; and, on her arrival, set before her some cakes of maize, sweetened with sugar,—a luxury equally new and agreeable to the Upsaroka bride. Further civilities beyond those interchangeable by signs were precluded between them, by the circumstance of their being each entirely ignorant of the other's language; but the offering of a string of blue beads after the cakes completed the triumph of the hostess in the good graces of her guest.

Besha did not lose this favourable opportunity for calling the attention of the latter to the subject of the prisoners, in whose behalf he expressed a hope that she would use her best exertions.

Bending-willow smiled, and said that she was a woman, and had no power in the council of the tribe.

The crafty horse-dealer saw at a glance how the assertion was belied by the smile, and replied,

"When White-Bull speaks, the braves listen : when Bending-willow speaks, does not White-Bull listen too ?"

The Upsaroka beauty looked down and counted the beads upon her new bracelet, with an expression of countenance which encouraged Besha to proceed. "These white men are of no use in the Upsaroka camp; they eat and drink, and kill no game. If they are sent back to their own people, the lodge of White-Bull will be full of presents, and the women will say, 'Look at Bending-willow; she is dressed like the wife of a great chief !'"

By these, and similar arguments, the Crow bride was easily induced to connive at the plot laid for the liberation of the prisoners. Being a good-natured creature, and feeling that the kindness of Prairie-bird to her had been ill-requited, she was the more willing to favour the white people, and only held Besha to the promise that in contriving their escape no injury should be done to the person or property of any of her tribe.

With the assistance of Bending-willow, Winge-nund found several opportunities of conversing with Ethelston and the Black Father ; but the camp was so strictly guarded that they could not

devise any plan that seemed to promise success, while a failure was sure to bring upon them more rigid confinement, if not a severer and more summary punishment. Wingenund was authorised by Besha to comfort them with the assurance that they had a true friend in White-Bull's bride, and that they were quite safe from the malignant designs of Mahéga. On the other hand, the horse-dealer positively refused, under present circumstances, to incur the risk of aiding their escape while the position of the camp was so unfavourable for it, and the Crow sentries were kept so much on the alert by the immediate vicinity of War-Eagle's party.

Under these circumstances, the youth had slipped away by night to consult with his friends whether the liberation of the prisoners should be attempted by force, or whether it might not be more advisable to throw the Crows off their guard by discontinuing the pursuit, and leaving it to the ingenuity of Wingenund to devise a plan for their escape.

These two alternatives having been duly discussed in council, it was almost unanimously agreed to adopt the latter; and Wingenund prepared again to return to his perilous post, having received from War-Eagle, Reginald, and Prairiebird the praises which his skill and enterprize had so well deserved.

He did not forget to take with him a small supply of beads and trinkets, which he concealed in his belt, and which were destined to secure the continued favour of Bending-willow.

As soon as he was gone, War-Eagle proposed that the party should quit their present station in search of one where they might be more likely to fall in with deer and bison, as meat was becoming very scarce in the camp; and a scout, sent out on the preceding day, had returned with a report that he had found, at the distance of half a day's march, a large and fertile valley, watered by a fine stream, and abounding in materials for fuel. This last consideration was of itself highly important, for the Crows had gathered every dry bush and stick from the barren glen in which they were now encamped; and the utmost exertions of the indefatigable Perrot scarcely enabled him to provide a sufficiency for cooking the necessary provisions; while the coldness of the atmosphere, especially at night, rendered the absence of fire a privation more than ordinarily severe.

The counsel of War-Eagle was therefore adopted without delay, it having been agreed that two of the most experienced men, the one a Delaware and the other a white hunter, should hover around the Crow camp, and communicate to the main body, from time to time, their movements and proceedings.

Having been supplied with an extra blanket, and a few pounds of dried meat and parched corn, these two hardy fellows saw their comrades depart without the least apparent concern, and soon afterwards withdrew to a sheltered and more elevated spot, whence they could, without being perceived, command a distant view of the Crow camp.

Following the steps of the scouts, War-Eagle led his party to a part of the valley where a huge rent or fissure in the side of the mountain rendered the ascent practicable for the horses. It was, however, a wild and rugged scene, and a fitting entrance to the vast pile of mountains, that showed their towering peaks far to the westward.

Prairie-bird was mounted upon Nekimi, and Reginald walked by her side, his hand ever ready to aid and guide him amongst the huge stones, which in some places obstructed the path.

Never had velvet lawn, or flower-embroidered vale, seemed to our hero half so smooth and pleasant as did that rocky pass. At every turn some new feature of grandeur arrested the attention of Prairie-bird, who expressed her admiration in language which was a strange mixture of natural eloquence and poetry, and which sounded to his ears more musical than "Apollo's lute."

What struck him as most remarkable was, that, whether in speaking of the magnificent scenery

around, or of the more minute objects which fell under her observation, her spirit was so imbued with Scripture, that she constantly clothed her ideas in its phraseology, without being conscious of so doing.

Thus, when in crossing the valley they passed by some ant-hills, and, in ascending the opposite height, saw here and there a mountain-rabbit nibbling the short moss that overspread the bed of rock, Reginald directed her attention to them, saying, "See, Prairie-bird, even in this desolate wilderness these insect-millions have built them a city, and the rabbit skips and feasts as merrily as in more fertile regions."

"True, dear Reginald," she replied, "therefore did the wise man say in days of old, 'The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer: the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.'"

A little further onward, the pass was overhung by an enormous cliff, from the top of which a bighorn looked down upon the party below, the long beard of the mountain-goat streaming in the wind. One of the hunters fired at it, but the harmless bullet glanced from the face of the cliff, while amid the echoes repeated and prolonged by the surrounding heights, the bighorn sprang from rock to rock across the yawning chasms by which they were divided, as lightly as the forest squirrel leaps

from a branch of the spreading oak to that of the neighbouring elm.

Reginald watched the animal's progress, and called the attention of Prairie-bird to the surprising swiftness and activity with which it held on its perilous course.

When at length it disappeared behind the angle of an abrupt precipice, she said, "Does it not call to your mind the description given of the wild-ass of the East, in the Book of Job, 'Who hath sent out the wild-ass free? or who hath loosened the band of the wild-ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwelling? He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.' Tell me, Reginald," continued the maiden, after a momentary pause, "can the creature here described be the same dull patient animal that I have often seen bearing the packs of the Mexican traders?"

"The same, I believe, dearest, in its origin, and its place in natural history, but widely different in its habits and powers, if we may credit the narratives of travellers, whether modern or ancient. I remember reading a most spirited description of this same animal in the account given by the eminent historian* of the expedition of the younger

* Xenophon.

Cyrus, who relates that the herds of them found near the banks of the Euphrates surpassed the swiftest horses in speed, and were neither to be tamed nor approached without the greatest difficulty; and in later times they have been described as abounding in the wildest regions of Persia and Tartary, where their flesh is considered one of the greatest delicacies at the table of the hunter, and even at that of the prince. In order to distinguish this animal from its humble and degraded kindred in the West, it has been dignified by the name of the Onager."

The conversation was here interrupted by a sudden halt in the line of march, and Reginald heard the sound of numerous voices towards the front as of men speaking under surprise and excitement. When he advanced, with Prairie-bird at his side, they made way for him to pass until he reached the front, where he found War-Eagle holding by a leatherthong the most singular-looking creature that he had ever beheld. It bore in some respects the semblance of a human being, but the extreme lowness of its stature, the matted hair by which it was covered, the length of the finger nails, and the smallness of the deep-set eyes made it almost a matter of doubt whether it did not rather belong to the monkey tribe.

This was, however, soon dispelled by Pierre, who recognized in the diminutive and terrified creature

one of the race known to mountain-hunters under the name of Root-diggers. They are the most abject and wretched of all the Indian tribes, living in caves and holes, and supporting their miserable existence upon such animals as they can catch, in toils of the simplest kind, and by grubbing and digging for roots such as no other human being could eat or digest. The one now taken by the Delawares had been engaged in the latter occupation when he first saw them approach, and he fled immediately towards the rocks. Had he been followed by an eye less sure, and a foot less fleet than that of War-Eagle he might have escaped, for, despite his uncouth appearance, he was nimble as a mountain-cat, but the Delaware chief overtook and secured him ; and in spite of all the endeavours made to reassure him, the unfortunate Root-digger now looked about him as if he expected every moment to be his last. Beads, trinkets, and shreds of bright-coloured cloth were all held up to him in turn, but were left unnoticed, and his deep twinkling eyes roved incessantly from one to another of the bystanders with an expression of the most intense alarm.

"Are they always thus fearful and intractable?" inquired Reginald of the Canadian hunter.

"Not always," replied Pierre ; "but the Crows, and Black-feet, and white men too, generally treat them worse than dogs whenever they find them ;

that is not often, for they always hide among rocks and stones, and seldom come down so low in the valleys. I never saw one in this region before."

"Prairie-bird," said Reginald, in a whisper to the maiden, "speak to the poor creature a few words of comfort. Were he shy, suspicious, and wild as a wolf, that voice would subdue and dispel his apprehensions."

"The sweetness of the voice lies in the hearer's partial ear," replied Prairie-bird, blushing deeply; "but I will do your bidding to the best of my power; and if I mistake not the poor creature's symptoms, I think I can find a means to relieve them."

So saying, and leaping lightly from her horse, the maiden took from one of the packs a piece of baked maize-cake, and a slice of dried bison-meat. Carrying these in her hand, she approached the Root-digger, and motioning to the bystanders to retire to some distance, she deliberately untied the thong by which he had been fastened, and placing the food before him, made signs that he should eat. At first the uncouth being gazed upon her as if he could or would not understand her meaning; but she spoke to him in the soft Delaware tongue, and eating a morsel of the cake, repeated the signal that he should eat with her. Whether overcome by the gentleness of her manner, or by the cravings of hunger, the savage no longer resisted, but devoured with ravenous haste the food which

she had set before him. Prairie-bird smiled at the success of her attempt, which so far encouraged her, that she again offered the several presents which he had before rejected, and which he now accepted, turning them over and over in his hand, and inspecting them with childish curiosity.

Reginald looked on with gratified pride, saying within himself, “ I knew that nothing could resist the winning tones of that voice !

‘ Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature ; ’

And where is there music like the voice of
Prairie-bird ? ”

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROOT-DIGGER MAKES FRIENDS WITH THE PARTY.—AN ADVENTURE WITH A GRISLY BEAR.—THE CONDUCT OF WAR-EAGLE.

No sooner had Prairie-bird gained the confidence of the Root-digger, than War-Eagle, Reginald, and the other chief hunters, approached him with signs of amity and friendship; nevertheless, he continued shy and suspicious, still refusing to receive either food or present from any hand excepting that of the maiden. They were obliged, therefore, to make her their interpreter, and to endeavour, through her, to acquire the information of which they were in want respecting the scarcity or abundance of deer and bison in the neighbourhood.

In the discharge of this office, Prairie-bird discovered so much natural quickness, and at the same time so complete a knowledge of the Indian language of signs, that Reginald looked on with the most intense interest while the maiden, whose beauty was so strongly contrasted with the hideous face and figure of the mountain dwarf, maintained

with him a conversation of some length, in the course of which she learnt that there were few, if any bison in the neighbourhood, but that the argali, or mountain sheep, and deer of several kinds, were to be found at no great distance. She succeeded also, at length, in so far disarming his suspicions, that he agreed to act as guide to Baptiste and Reginald in pursuit of game, and to return with them to reap the reward of his trouble in further presents from the hand of Prairie-bird.

The sturdy back-woodsman did not seem to place much confidence in the fidelity of his new acquaintance, and bluntly observed to Pierre, "For sure, I never saw an uglier crittur, and his eyes roll from side to side with an underlook that I don't half like; perhaps he'll lead us into some ambush of Upsarokas, or other mountain Ingians, rather than to a herd of deer."

"You need not be afraid, Baptiste," replied his brother hunter, laughing; "these poor Root-diggers are harmless and honest in their own miserable way. They are said to belong to the Shoshonies, or Snake-tribe, and are the best of all the Ingians hereabouts; not such fighting devils as the Black-feet, nor such thieves as the Crows, but friendly to the Whites. This poor crittur has been digging for roots many a long day with that sharpened flint, which you see in his hand. After you have started on your hunting trip, make him a present of a good knife. I have watched his eyes roving

from belt to belt; he would give his ears for one, and yet is too frightened to ask for it."

"Thanks for the hint, Pierre," said his companion, looking carefully to the priming of his rifle; "thanks for the hint. I will carry a spare one with me on purpose; and in case we should fall in with a fat herd, do you, friend War-Eagle, give us the company of one of your stoutest men, that he may assist in bringing in enough meat for the party."

On hearing these words, Prairie-bird inquired of the Root-digger, by signs, whether one of the mules could not go over the hunting-ground. The savage looked first at the animal, then at the fair speaker, and then, with a grin, gave a most decided indication of a negative.

The preparations for the hunt were soon made. Prairie-bird urged Reginald, in a low voice, not to remain too long absent, a command which he faithfully promised to obey; and just as he was about to set forth, he led her up to the chief, and said, "War-Eagle will take care of his sister?"

The Indian's proud heart was gratified by this simple proof of his friend's unbounded confidence; he saw that no jealousy, no doubt of his victory over self, lurked in the breast of Reginald, and he replied, "While War-Eagle has life to protect her, Olitipa shall be safe as in the lodge of Tame-nund."

Reginald turned and followed Baptiste and the Root-digger, who had already taken their way up

the valley, accompanied by the Delaware selected to aid in carrying home the anticipated booty.

Leaving them to toil up one rocky steep after another, wondering at the enduring agility of the Shoshonie dwarf, who seemed almost as active and sure-footed as one of the mountain-goats of which they were in search, we will return to the valley where War-Eagle's camp was posted, which formed, as we have before noticed, a pleasing contrast to the savage scenery around. The stream that flowed through its centre fresh from the snowy bosom of the mountain, was cool and clear as crystal, and the shade of the trees which grew along its banks was delightfully refreshing after the fatigues of a summer march, even in a region the elevation of which rendered the atmosphere extremely cold before the rising and after the setting of the sun. Prairie-bird felt an irresistible desire to stroll by the banks of this stream,—a desire that was no sooner mentioned by Lita to War-Eagle than he at once assented, assuring her that she might do so in safety, as his scouts were on the look-out both above and below in the valley, so that no enemy could approach unperceived. At the same time he gave instructions in the camp that none of the men should wander to that quarter, in order that it might be left altogether undisturbed.

Shortly afterwards Prairie-bird set forth, taking in her hand a moccasin, which she was ornament-

ing with stained quills for the foot of Reginald, and accompanied by her faithful Lita, who bore upon her head a bundle containing various articles belonging to her mistress and to herself, on which she was about to exercise her talents as a laundress.

They had pursued their respective avocations for several hours without interruption, when on a sudden they heard the report of a rifle and the voice of a man shouting, as if engaged in the pursuit of game. This was an occurrence to which both were so much accustomed, that they paid at first little attention to it; but they felt some alarm when they saw one of their party, a white hunter, coming towards them as if running for his life. Before reaching the spot where they were seated, he threw his rifle upon the ground, and climbed into a tree; immediately afterwards a young male, not full-grown, of the species called the grisly or rocky mountain bear, came up, limping as if wounded by the rifle so lately discharged, and missing the object that he had been following, looked around him, howling with mingled rage and pain. At length he caught sight of Prairiebird and her companion; and setting up a more loud and angry howl, trotted towards them. Unfortunately, the spot to which they had retired was a narrow strip of wooded ground, projecting into a curve of the stream above-mentioned, and they could not retreat towards the camp without ap-

proaching yet nearer to the wounded bear. There was no time for reflection; and in the sudden emergency, Prairie-bird hesitated whether she should not adopt the desperate alternative of throwing herself into the water, in hopes that the stream might carry her out of the reach of danger.

At this crisis the crack of a rifle was heard, and the young bear fell, but again rose and struggled forward, as if determined not to be disappointed of its prey. Seeing the imminent danger of the women, the hunter who had climbed the tree dropped lightly to the ground, and catching up his rifle, attacked the half-exhausted animal, which still retained sufficient strength to render too near an approach extremely dangerous. War-Eagle, for he it was who had fired the last opportune shot, now sprang forward from the bushes, reloading his rifle as he came, in order to decide the issue of the conflict, when a loud shriek from Lita reached his ear; and on turning round he beheld the dam of the wounded cub, a she-bear of enormous bulk, trotting rapidly forward to the scene of action; the hunter was so much engaged in dealing blow after blow with the butt of his rifle, that he had noticed neither her approach nor the warning shout of War-Eagle, when one stroke from her terrible paw struck him bleeding and senseless to the ground. For an instant she smelt and moaned over her dying offspring; then, as if attracted by the female dress, pursued her way with redoubled speed and fury

towards the spot where Lita clung, with speechless terror, to the arm of her mistress. The latter, although fully alive to the imminency of the peril, lost not her composure at this trying moment. Breathing a short prayer to Heaven for support and protection, she fixed her eyes upon War-Eagle, as if conscious that the only human possibility of safety now lay in his courage and devotion.

Then it was that the Indian chief evinced the high and heroic properties of his character; for although every second brought the infuriated brute near and more near to her who had been from youth his heart's dearest treasure, he continued, as he advanced, to load the rifle with a hand as steady as if he had been about to practise at a target; and just as the ball was rammed home, and the priming carefully placed in the pan, he threw himself directly in front of the bear, so that it was only by first destroying him that she could possibly approach the objects of his care. It was a moment, and but a moment, of dreadful suspense, for the bear swerved neither to the right nor to the left from her onward path, and it was not until the muzzle of the rifle was within three yards of her forehead that he fired, taking his aim between her eyes; shaking her head as if more angered than hurt, she raised her huge form on her hind legs, and advanced to seize him, when he drew his pistol and discharged it into her chest, springing at the

same time lightly back, almost to the spot to which Prairie-bird and her trembling companion seemed rooted as if by a spell. Although both shots had struck where they were aimed, the second appeared to have taken no more effect than the first, and the bear was again advancing to the attack, when War-Eagle, catching up from the ground a blanket which Lita had brought down to the brook, held it extended before him until the monster sprung against it, and with her claws rent it into shreds; not, however, before it had served for an instant the purpose of a veil; profiting by that opportunity, the heroic Delaware dashed in between her fore-paws and plunged his long knife into her breast. Short, though terrible, was the struggle that ensued; the bear was every moment growing weaker from the effect of the shot-wounds, and from loss of blood, and although she lacerated him dreadfully with her claws and teeth, she was not able to make him relax the determined grasp with which he clung to her, plunging the fatal knife again and again into her body, until at length she fell exhausted and expiring into a pool of her own blood, while the triumphant war-cry of the Delaware rung aloud through wood and vale.*

* To some who have read the descriptions of bear-hunts in Norway and Russia it may appear neither wonderful nor unusual that a single hunter should kill a full-grown bear; but it must be borne in mind, that the bear of the north of Europe bears about the same proportion to a grisly bear of the Rocky

Alarmed by the shots, the yells of the dying bear, and the shouts of the chief, several of the party now hastened towards the scene of action ; but before they could reach it Reginald Brandon, who was just returning into the camp with the results of a successful chase, caught the mingled sounds, and outstripping all his companions, arrived, panting and breathless, on the spot. For a moment he gazed on the strange and fearful spectacle that met his view. The Delaware chief, supporting his head upon his hand, still reclined against the body of his grim antagonist, his countenance calm in its expres-

Mountains (*Ursus Horribilis*) as a panther does to a Bengal tiger. The grisly bear is not only the largest and most ferocious of his species, but his tenacity of life is so remarkable that he frequently runs a considerable distance and survives some hours after receiving several balls through the lungs, head, and heart. On this account it is never safe for the most experienced marksman to attack him alone, unless there be some tree or place of safety at hand, for the grisly bear cannot or will not climb a tree ; and some idea of the animal's strength may be formed from the fact, attested by many credible witnesses, that, after killing a bison, he will frequently drag the carcase some distance to his lair. For descriptions and anecdotes of the grisly bear see Lewis and Clarke's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, and Major Long's ditto. A feat almost similar to that recorded in the text was performed some years ago by an Iroquois, one of the last of his tribe, and who, though grievously wounded, survived. The Author saw this Indian hero arrive at St. Louis in a canoe, containing only himself and a boy, they having descended the Missouri for more than 1500 miles in their frail bark ; and having passed in their perilous voyage the villages of Crows, Riccarces, Sioux, Black-feet, and other predatory tribes.

sion, but both his face and his whole form covered with recent blood ; at his feet lay Lita, perfectly unconscious, and sprinkled with the same crimson stream ; while at his side knelt Prairie-bird, breathing over her heroic preserver the fervent outpourings of a grateful heart ! Another moment, and Reginald was beside her ; he understood instinctively all that had passed, and no sooner had ascertained that his betrothed was safe and unhurt, than he turned with affectionate and anxious solicitude to inquire into the condition of his friend. " Olitipa is safe and War-Eagle is happy," replied the chief.

By this time the Delawares were all gathered round their beloved leader, and in obedience to an order which he gave in a low voice, one of them threw a blanket over his torn and blood-stained dress, while another brought from the stream a bowl of fresh water, which Prairie-bird took from the messenger, and held to his parched lips ; then, wetting a cloth, she washed the blood from his face, cooled his hot brow, and inquired in a tone of sisterly affection, whether he found himself recruited and refreshed.

" The hand of Olitipa is medicine against pain, and her voice brings comfort !" replied the chief gently. " War-Eagle is quite happy."

Not so were those around him. His stern warriors stood in sad, unbroken silence ; the features of the hardy Guide worked with an emotion that

he strove in vain to conceal, for he knew that the Delaware would not have retained his sitting posture by the carcase of the bear had not his wounds been grievous and disabling; Reginald Brandon held the hand of his friend, unable to speak, save a few broken words of affection and gratitude: while Prairie-bird found at length relief for her oppressed heart in a flood of tears. So much engrossed were they all by their own feelings, that none seemed to notice the anguish of Lita, who still lay in a pool of blood at the feet of him whom she had long and secretly loved, giving no further signs of life than a succession of smothered wailings and groans that escaped from her unconscious lips.

The only countenance among those present that retained its unmoved composure was that of the Chief himself; and a bright ray shot from his dark eye when one of the bravest of his warriors laid down before him the claws of the huge bear and her cub, which he had cut off according to custom, and now presented as a trophy of victory.

Baptiste and Pierre having conferred together for a few minutes, the former whispered to Reginald Brandon that Prairie-bird and Lita should be withdrawn for a short time, while War-Eagle's wounds were examined, and his real condition ascertained. Agreeably to this suggestion, Reginald led his betrothed weeping from the spot.

Some of the Delawares and hunters removed Lita; but not without difficulty, as she still clung with frantic energy to the torn garments of the Chief; and, as they bore her away, they now for the first time observed that she had received some severe scratches in her fruitless endeavour to rescue him from the struggles of the dying bear.

When all had retired to some distance, and there remained only by the Delaware the oldest of his warriors, Pierre and Baptiste, the latter gently lifted the blanket from the shoulders of the wounded man, saying, "Let my brother allow his friends to see the hurts which he has received, that they may endeavour to relieve or heal them."

The Chief nodded his assent, and no sign, save the dew that stood upon his brow, betrayed the agony and the sense of exhaustion that he endured. When the tattered remnants of his hunting dress were removed, a spectacle so terrible was presented to the eyes of the Guide, that even his iron nerves could not endure it, and, covering his face with his hands, he groaned aloud, while the exclamation, "Dieu de la misericorde!" broke from his lips in the language that they had first been taught to speak.

The left arm of the chief was bitten through and through, and so dreadfully mangled that no skill of surgery could restore it; the shoulders and chest had been lacerated by the fore-paws,

some of the wounds being wide and gaping, as if made by a saw or hatchet; these, however, might possibly yield to time and careful treatment; but the injuries that he had received in the lower part of the body were such as to leave no hope of recovery, for the bear, in her last dying struggles, had used the terrible claws of her hind-feet with such fatal effect, that the lacerated entrails of the sufferer protruded through the wound.

Baptiste saw at a glance that all was over, and that any attempt at closing the wounds would only cause additional and needless pain. War-Eagle watched his countenance, and reading there a verdict that confirmed his own sensations, gave him his hand and smiled. The rough woodsman wrung it with ill-dissembled emotion, and turned away his head that his Indian friend might not see the moisture that gathered in his eye.

A brief consultation now ensued, during which it was arranged that the carcases of the bears should be carried away, and the wounded chief gently moved to a soft grassy spot a few yards distant, where his wounds might be so far dressed and bandaged as to prevent further effusion of blood. It was also agreed that the tent and the lodges should be brought to the spot, so that he might receive all the care and attention that his desperate case admitted.

These arrangements having been made, Baptiste walked slowly towards the place where the rest

of the party awaited in deep anxiety the result of his report. As he drew near with heavy, lingering steps, and his weather-beaten countenance overspread with gloom, they saw too well the purport of his message, and none had courage enough to be the first to bid him speak. Prairie-bird clung to the arm of Reginald for support; the Delawares leaned upon their rifles in silence; and even the rough hunters of the prairie wore an aspect of sadness that contrasted strongly with their habitual bold and reckless bearing.

Recovering his composure by a powerful effort, the Guide looked gravely around him as soon as he reached the centre of the semicircle in which they stood, and addressing himself first to Reginald and the white men, said, "There is no cure for the wounds of the Delaware; were the Black Father himself among us, his skill and his medicine would be in vain." Then turning to the Delawares, he added in their own tongue, "The sun of the Lenape Chief is setting. The Great Spirit has sent for him, and he must obey: let his warriors gather round him to smooth his path through the dark valley."

Having thus spoken, the Guide hastened to carry into effect the arrangements above mentioned, and in a short time the little camp was moved to the spot where the Delaware reclined against the stump of a withered alder, over which his followers had already thrown some

blankets and buffalo-robés to soften his couch. Hither was brought the tent of Prairie-bird, which was so pitched that the outer compartment might shelter the wounded chief, and might afford to Reginald and Prairie-bird the means of watching him constantly, and administering such relief in his extremity, as was within their power.

Lita's energies, both of mind and body, seemed entirely paralyzed, she neither wept nor sobbed, but sate in a corner of the tent, whence she gazed intently, yet with a vacant expression, upon the sufferer.

He alone of the whole party maintained throughout a dignified and unmoved composure ; nor could either the pangs he endured, nor the certain prospect of a lingering death, draw from him a word of complaint. He smiled gratefully as Prairie-bird from time to time raised the refreshing cup of water to his lips, or wiped away the drops which weakness and agony wrung from his forehead. Once, and once only, did a look of gloom and discontent pass over his countenance.

Reginald observing it, took his hand and inquired, "Is there a dark thought in my brother's heart, let him speak it?"

"There is," replied the chief, with stern energy, "Mahéga, the bloody-hand—the Washashe wolf—the slayer of my tribe, he lives, and War-Eagle must go to the hunting-fields of the brave, and when his fathers say to him, 'where is the scalp of

Mahéga?' his tongue will be silent, and his hands will be empty."

"His hands will not be empty," replied Reginald, breathing his own impassioned feelings in the figurative language of his friend. "His hands will not be empty; he can shew the scalps of many enemies; he may tell the ancient people that he was the war-chief of their race, that neither Was-hashe nor Dahcotah ever saw his back; and that, to save his sister's life, he gave his own. Where is the warrior who would not envy the fame of War-Eagle, and who would not rejoice in the glory of such a death?"

These words, and the tone of earnest feeling in which they were spoken, touched the right chord in the heart of the Chief; he pressed the hand of his friend, and a smile of triumph shot across his features like a sunbeam breaking through the thick darkness of a thunder-cloud.

CHAPTER X.

MAHEGA IS FOUND IN STRANGE COMPANY, AND WINGENUND DEFERS, ON ACCOUNT OF MORE IMPORTANT CONCERNS, HIS PLAN FOR THE LIBERATION OF HIS FRIENDS.—A COUNCIL, A COMBAT, AND A SKIRMISH, IN WHICH LAST THE CROWS RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM A QUARTER WHENCE THEY LEAST EXPECTED IT.

WE left Wingenund on his way to the Crow camp, revolving as he went various schemes for the deliverance of his friends. However slight was the faith which he was disposed to place in the honesty of Besha, he confidently believed that the horse-dealer's self-interest would keep him true, at least for the time, to the party whence the greater rewards and presents might be expected. He knew also that Bending-willow was kindly disposed towards the prisoners, and would do all that was in her power towards engaging her impatient and hot-headed husband to favour their release. Nevertheless, the game to be played was a difficult one, especially as the consequence of any unsuccessful attempt might prove fatal to them as well as to himself.

So intent was the youth upon these meditations that he forgot the distance and the difficulties of

his circuitous route, his light elastic step bearing him over hill and vale with a speed of which he was scarcely conscious, and long before the sun went down he found himself at the further extremity of the mountain pass, which has been before mentioned as leading into the valley where the Crows were encamped, from a quarter exactly opposite to that where his own friends were stationed.

As he was about to step across a small rivulet that trickled from the rocks above, lending a greener freshness to the narrow strip of grass through which it flowed, his attention was arrested by a recent footmark upon its margin. Starting with surprize, he stooped to examine it more carefully, it was plain and distinct, so that a less sagacious eye than his might have traced its form and dimensions. A single look satisfied him, and as he rose from his scrutiny, the name of Mahéga escaped from his lips.

Without a moment's hesitation he resolved to follow the trail of the Osage and observe his movements, conjecturing that these probably boded no good to the Delaware party, although he felt at some loss to imagine what object could lead him to a quarter almost immediately opposite to that where they were encamped.

The task which Wingenund had now undertaken was not an easy one, for the ground was hard and barren, and the short grass partly dried by the mountain-winds and partly burnt by the summer-

sun, scarcely received any impression from the pressure of a foot, and the youth was compelled to pause so frequently in order to examine the scarcely-perceptible marks of the trail, that his progress was far from being so rapid as he could have wished. Nevertheless he toiled perseveringly forward, his hopes being every now and then refreshed by finding on the descent of the steep hill-side an indication of the Osage's tread that he could not mistake.

Wingenund had followed the trail for several hours, when he caught a distant view of a slight column of smoke rising from a dell, the bottom of which was concealed by intervening heights. One of these, more rugged and lofty than the rest, lay at his right hand, and he climbed with some difficulty to the top of it, in hopes of being able thence to descry the spot whence the smoke arose. Neither was he disappointed in this expectation, for on reaching the height, he could see into the deep bosom of the mountain glen, where he clearly discerned a large body of men and horses, assembled round a fire; carefully noting the nature of the intervening ground, he re-descended the hill, and again threw himself upon the trail of the Osage, which continued, as he expected, to lead him in the direction of the unknown band.

As he advanced he felt the necessity of using the greatest caution lest he should inadvertently come within sight of any scouts or stragglers from

the valley below; but fortune and his own skill so far favoured his approach, that he reached unperceived a point whence he could more clearly see the circle assembled round the fire, and could distinguish the horses and the men sufficiently to ascertain that they belonged to some mountain tribe bent on a war excursion, as they had with them neither their women nor their lodges. With awakened curiosity and interest, the youth now crept to a spot at a little distance, where a confused pile of huge stones, here and there overgrown with stunted shrubs, offered a sheltered retreat, whence, without being himself seen, he could observe all that passed below. In making his way to the place he was somewhat surprised to find what might almost be called a beaten path, upon which the recent tracks of men and horses, as well as of bison, were clearly discernible.

He had scarcely time to conceal himself, when he perceived two men coming directly towards his hiding-place, in one of whom he recognised the Osage chief, while the other belonged apparently to some tribe of Indians that he had never seen before. They came slowly up the path before-mentioned, stopping almost at every step, and conversing in the language of signs, by which means their expressions of mutual friendship were as intelligible to the quick-witted youth as they were to each other. The stranger was a fine looking Indian, and though lower in stature than

his gigantic companion, had the appearance of great muscular strength, and his dress betokened, according to Indian notions of magnificence, a chief of high degree. His black hair was clubbed behind his head, and fastened with several painted feathers bound with fillets of ermine; his hunting-shirt was of the skin of the mountain-goat, and both it and his deerskin leggins were ornamented with porcupine-quills, and fringed with the scalp-locks of enemies slain in battle; he carried in his hand a long lance, also decorated with scalp-locks, and at his back hung a quiver made from the skin of the panther, in which bristled a score of arrows beautifully tipped with sharp flint, and attached to it by a leather thong, was a bow so short, that it looked more like the plaything of a boy than the deadly weapon of a warrior.

Wingenund wondered to what tribe the stranger might belong; and as the two Indians seated themselves upon a fragment of rock only a few yards from the recess in which he was ensconced, he trusted that some signal would pass by which his curiosity might be afterwards satisfied; at all events, it seemed clear that they were already upon the best terms with each other, for they smiled and grinned, each placing a hand upon the heart of the other, after which Mahéga extended his arms like a flying bird, and then passed his right hand with a rapid movement round his own scalp; from which sign the youth instantly knew

that their plot was to attack and kill the Upsarokas.

"Double-tongued cowardly snake!" said Wingenund to himself, "he made a league with the Dahcotahs to destroy his Lenape friends, and now he makes one with a stranger tribe to destroy those with whom he eats and smokes."

That the youth rightly conjectured the object of the interview he could no longer doubt, when Mahéga, pointing directly to the valley where the Crows were encamped, repeated again the signals for attack and slaughter. Not a word passed during this time, excepting when the stranger drew from under his hunting-shirt a small whistle, made apparently either from a bone or a reed, and quaintly ornamented with stained quills and the down from the breast of some mountain bird; having applied this to his lips, he drew from it a peculiar sound, not remarkable for its shrillness, but different from any tone that Wingenund remembered to have heard before.

After two or three attempts, Mahéga succeeded in sounding it correctly; and nodding intelligently to the stranger, concealed it carefully in his belt; they then exchanged the names or war-cry, by which they were to recognise each other, Mahéga teaching his new friend to say "*Washashe*," and learning in return to pronounce "*Kain-na*," which he repeated three or four times so distinctly, that Wingenund caught and remembered

it. These preparatory civilities having passed, they proceeded to the interchange of presents, by which their alliance was to be cemented.

Mahéga drew from his girdle a pistol, which he gave, together with a small leather pouch containing lead and powder, to the stranger chief, who received it with an air so puzzled and mysterious, that Mahéga could scarcely refrain from smiling. He turned the pistol over and over, looking down the barrel, and examining the lock with a curiosity that he cared not to conceal; he pointed it, however, towards a mark in an adjoining rock, and made a sound with his lips, which was intended to imitate its report, repeating at the same time the word “*sachsi-nama*,” as if to show that the name and use of the weapon were not strange to him, although he might never have seen one before. Mahéga then proceeded to show him how to use it, making signs that with it he might kill all his enemies; and upon the stranger expressing a wish to see an instance of its power, he placed a thin flat stone at the distance of a few yards, and split it in two at the first shot; after which he reloaded it, showing at the same time the use of the priming-pan and trigger.

It was not without a look of gratified pride that he placed the pistol in his belt, repeating again and again, “*sachsi-nama*,” “*nahtovi-nama*.” He then unslung the short bow that hung at his back, and presented it, with the panther-skin quiver full

of arrows, to the Osage chief, who received the gift with every appearance of satisfaction, and they parted, the former returning towards the encampment of his tribe, after he had told Mahéga that the name of the bow was “nutsi-nâma.”*

For some time after the departure of his new ally, the Osage remained upon his seat examining the bow, which at first sight he had considered a mere toy, but which he found, to his astonishment, required all his force to draw it to its full power. Being formed of bone, strengthened throughout with sinew, it was stiff and elastic

* Of all the Indian nations who inhabit the wild regions near the base of the Rocky-Mountain range, the most fierce and powerful are the Black-feet. Few, if any white men have penetrated into the heart of their country, and returned to tell their tale. Very little is known, therefore, either of their customs or language: and it may not be uninteresting for the reader to be informed, that every particular mentioned respecting them in this volume, was obtained direct from a French trader, who had been permitted to marry a Black-foot wife, and had resided nineteen years among them. The construction of their language is very remarkable, and some account of it would doubtless be gladly received by philologists; but such a subject cannot be treated in a work like the present. With respect to the words referred to in the text, it will be seen that they show the synthetic nature of the language, “nâma” being the root, and signifying a *weapon*. Hence came “suksinâma,” *rifle*; literally, “heavy-weapon;” “saksinâma,” *pistol*; literally, “light-weapon;” “nahtovinâma,” *wonderful, or medicine-weapon*; and “nitsinâma,” literally, *useless weapon*; which latter name has probably been given to the bow since the Black-feet have learnt the superior efficacy of fire-arms.

to an extraordinary degree; and although not more than three feet in length, would drive an arrow as far as an ordinary six-feet bow.

When he had sufficiently examined his new acquisition, it occurred to the chief that he could not, without risk of detection, carry it into the Crow camp. He resolved, therefore, to hide it in a dry cleft of the rock, and take it out again after the issue of his plot should be decided.

This resolution threatened to bring about an unexpected catastrophe, as it happened that he approached the very recess in which Wingenund was stationed. Drawing the knife from his belt, the youth stood in the inmost corner of the cavern, ready, as soon as discovery became inevitable, to spring upon his powerful enemy; but fate had otherwise decreed, and the Osage passed on to a higher and narrower cleft, where he deposited the quiver and the bow, carefully closing the aperture with moss and lichen.

It was not until he had gone some distance on his homeward way, that Wingenund emerged from his hiding-place, and having possessed himself of the quiver and bow, returned slowly upon the Osage's trail towards the Upsaroka camp, proving as he went the surprising strength of the weapon, and admiring the straightness and beauty of the war-arrows with which the quiver was supplied.*

* It may not be generally known to European readers, that the arrows used by the western Indians are of two sorts. The

Following unperceived, and at some distance, the steps of the Osage, he found that the latter took a shorter, though a somewhat steeper and more rugged way than that by which he had come ; so that very little more than two hours of brisk walking brought him within sight of the watch-fires of the Upsaroka camp, just as day closed, and their light began to shine more brightly through the valley. Availing himself of the shelter of a stunted pine, the youth lay down for some time, and did not re-enter the camp until late at night, when he made his way without interruption to Besha's tent, giving to the outposts by whom he was challenged the countersign taught him by the horse-dealer.

On the following morning, before sunrise, Besha was aroused by Wingenund, who told him that he had news of great importance to communicate to the Crow chiefs, and that no time should be lost before they were summoned to council. The horse-dealer rubbed his eyes, as he wakened by degrees, and listened to this intelligence, which he suspected at first to be some trick on the part of the youth for the liberation of his friends ; but there was an earnest simplicity in his manner that *hunting-arrow*, which has a head tapering in the form of an acute lozenge, and firmly secured to the shaft, so as to be easily withdrawn from a wound, and the war-arrow, sometimes poisoned, but always barbed like a fish-hook, and having its head so slightly fastened to the shaft, as to remain infixed in the wound when the wood is pulled out.

carried conviction with it ; and Besha endeavoured, as he threw on his hunting-shirt, and fastened his belt, to learn from the youth the nature and purport of his intelligence. The latter seemed, however, to be in no very communicative mood ; he merely replied, “Wingenund speaks not the Ussaroka tongue ; let Besha repeat to the council word after word what he hears, that will be enough ; he will serve both the Crows and the Delawares, and will obtain thanks and presents from both. Let Mahéga, too, be called to attend the council.”

The horse-dealer having departed upon his errand, Wingenund found an opportunity to detail briefly to Paul Müller and Ethelston the discovery that he had made on the preceding evening ; but it may well be imagined that he could obtain from neither any information respecting the mountain tribe with whom the Osage was carrying on his treacherous intrigue.

“Let my son boldly speak the truth,” said the Missionary, “and leave the result to God.”

“Wingenund never told a lie,” replied the young Delaware ; and the bright, fearless expression of his countenance warranted the proud assertion.

“How many are there in our crowded cities and churches,” said the Missionary, looking after the youth as he re-entered the horse-dealer’s lodge, “who dare echo that speech ? yet methinks, as far as memory and conscience serve him, he has said no more than the truth. I have known him from

his childhood, and believe him to be as much a stranger to falsehood as to fear."

"They are cousins-german, my worthy friend," said Ethelston, "and generally dwell together! I wonder not at the affection which Reginald bears to that youth; nature has stamped upon his countenance all the high and generous qualities that endear man to his brother. Let us endeavour to be present at the council which is now assembling; we have been such quiet prisoners that perhaps our guards will allow us to be spectators on this occasion."

Besha happening to pass at this moment, obtained for them the desired permission, which was the more readily granted that the Crow sentries themselves were desirous of seeing what was going forward, and knew that no danger could be apprehended from the two unarmed captives. The spectacle that met their view when they issued from the lodge was striking and picturesque; runners had been sent throughout the camp, and all the principal chiefs, braves, and medicine-men were already assembled in a semicircle, the concave centre of which was formed by the lodge of White-Bull and his father, the latter of whom had put on for the occasion a magnificent head-dress of painted eagle-feathers which betokened his rank as head-chief of the band. The horse-dealer stood in front of his own lodge to the left, and frequent were the glances directed to him from all quarters,

it having been generally understood that the council was summoned to consider matters brought forward by him. Behind him stood Wingenund, wrapped in a loose blanket, which partially concealed his features and covered entirely the rest of his person; on the opposite wing of the circle, and at a distance of twenty-five or thirty yards, stood Mahéga, his gigantic stature shown off to the best advantage by the warlike dress which he had put on complete for the solemn occasion, his neck and arms being covered with beads of various colours, and his fingers playing unconsciously with the weighty iron-pointed mace or war-club which had slain so many of those whose scalp-locks now fringed his leathern shirt and hose. The warriors and other Indians of inferior degree stood in the back-ground, and some anxious to get a better view of what was going forward, had perched themselves upon the adjoining rocks and cliffs, where their dusky forms, dimly seen through the mists which were now vanishing before the beams of the rising sun, gave a wild and picturesque effect to the scene.

Nearly half an hour was consumed by the sooth-sayers or medicine-men in going through their formal mummeries to ascertain whether the hour and the occasion were favourable for the proposed business, and it was not until the medicine-pipe had been passed round, and the chief functionary had turned gravely to the north, south, east, and

west, blowing to each quarter successively a whiff of medicine-smoke, that he gave his permission for the council to proceed with its deliberations.

During all this time a profound silence reigned throughout the camp, the women suspending their scolding, chattering, and domestic avocations, and even the children peeping, half-frightened, from behind their mothers, or stealing away to some spot where they might laugh and play without fear of being whipped for disturbing the solemnities.

The venerable father of White-Bull now returned the great pipe to the medicine-men, saying, in a voice distinctly audible throughout the circle, "Besha has called the chiefs and braves of the Upsaroka together; they are come—their ears are open—let the one-eyed man who brings horses from the far prairies, speak with a single tongue."

Thus called upon, the horse-dealer stepped forward, saying, "Besha is neither wise in council, nor a chief among warriors; he has travelled far among the eastern tribes, and he knows their tongues; he stands here to give out of his mouth what goes in at his ear. Let the Upsaroka warriors listen; they are not fools, they will soon know if lies are told to them. Let them look at this youth; his blanket is that of Besha's slave; he is not what he seems; he is a son of the Lenape, a friend of the Whites; yet he is come alone into the camp to show to the Upsaroka that a snake is crawling among their lodges."

A murmur ran through the assembly as Besha pronounced these words, and pointed to Wingenund, who, throwing the blanket into the hollow of his left arm, advanced to the front, and with a slight inclination to the old chief, awaited his permission to proceed.

The youth, the graceful form, the open countenance, and the dignified bearing of Wingenund as he stood forward in the assembled circle, prepossessed the Crows strongly in his favour; and they awaited with excited curiosity the intelligence that he had to communicate; but their chief did not appear disposed to gratify their impatience, for after whispering a few words to a messenger who stood beside him, he relapsed into silence, scanning with a fixed gaze the countenance of the young Delaware. The latter bore the scrutiny with modest, yet undisturbed composure, and not a voice was raised in the council until the return of the messenger, conducting a Crow doctor or conjuror, somewhat advanced in years, who took his station by the chief, and gave a silent assent to the whispered orders that he received.

It may well be imagined with what mingled feelings of surprise and indignation the haughty Osage beheld the young Delaware thus standing forward in the midst of the council-circle; that his presence boded no good to himself he well knew; but how and wherefore he came, and why he, belonging as he did to a hostile band, was

thus permitted to appear before the assembly of Crow warriors, he was quite at a loss to understand. His suspense, however, was not destined to be of long duration, for as soon as Besha, in obedience to a signal from the chief, had desired Wingenund to speak what he had to say, the youth came another step forward, and said in a clear voice—

“ There is a snake among the lodges of the Upsaroka; a hidden snake, that will bite before its rattle is heard.”

The Crows looked from one to the other as Besha translated this sentence, and the old conjuror gave a slight nod to the chief, indicating that the youth’s meaning was rightly given. It may be as well to inform the reader, that the said conjuror had in early life been taken prisoner by the Pawnees, with a party of whom he had been conveyed to a great council held with the Indian agents at St. Charles’s, in Missouri, respecting the cession and appropriation of territory. Several of the Western Delawares had been present at this meeting, which was protracted for many weeks, and the Crow prisoner had picked up a smattering of their tongue, which, however slight it might be, had occasioned him to be sent for on this occasion to check any propensity for untruth that might be entertained by the horse-dealer. Whether the latter was influenced by these, or by other motives, he rendered faithfully

the conversation that ensued, and therefore it is not necessary to notice further the part played by the interpreter.

“Who is it that speaks?” demanded the old chief, with dignity: “the Crows open not their ears to the idle words of strangers.”

“Then let them shut their ears,” replied the youth boldly. “Before another sun has set they will wish they had listened to the words of Wingenund!”

“Who is Wingenund? Is he not an enemy? have not his people shed Upsaroka blood? why then should they believe his words?”

“Wingenund is the son of a Lenapé chief. For a thousand summers his fathers have hunted over forest and plain beyond the Great River. Wingenund has heard of their deeds, and he will not stain his lips with a lie. The Lenapé have taken Crow scalps in defence of their own, Wingenund will not deny it; but he came here to serve his white friends, not to hurt the Upsaroka.”

On hearing this bold reply, White-Bull bent his brow fiercely upon the speaker; but the youth met his eye with a look of bright untroubled confidence, while he quietly awaited the chief’s further interrogation.

“Let the son of the Lenapé speak, but let him beware,—if his tongue is forked the Upsaroka knives will cut it out from his head.”

“Wingenund is not a woman that he should be

frightened with big words ; when he speaks, the truth comes from his lips, and if he chooses to be silent, the Upsaroka knives cannot make him speak," replied the youth, with a look of lofty scorn.

"Is it so—we shall see," cried White-Bull, springing forward, at the same time drawing his knife, with which he struck full at the naked breast of the youth. Not a muscle moved in the form or countenance of Wingenund, his eye remained steadily fixed on that of the Crow, and he did not even raise in his defence the arm over which his blanket was suspended. Nothing could have saved him from instant death had not White-Bull himself arrested the blow just as it was falling, so that the point of the knife scratched but did not penetrate the skin. Wingenund smiled, and the Crow warrior, partly ashamed of his own ebullition of temper, and partly in admiration of the cool courage of the young Delaware, said to his father, "Let him speak, there are no lies upon his tongue."

The old man looked for a moment sternly at his son, as if he would have reproved him for his violence, in interrupting the business of the council, but apparently he thought it better to let it pass; and turning towards Wingenund, he said in a milder tone than he had yet used, "Let the young stranger speak if he will, his words will not be blown away ; if he has seen a snake, let him

show it, and the chiefs of the Upsaroka will owe him a debt."

Thus appealed to, Wingenund, slowly raising the forefinger of his right hand, pointed it full upon Mahéga, saying, in a loud voice, "There is the snake! Fed by the hand of the Upsaroka, clad in their gifts, warmed by their fire, he now tries to bite them, and give them over to their enemies, even as his black heart and forked tongue have before destroyed those whom he called brothers."

It is beyond the power of words to paint the rage of the conscious Osage, on hearing this charge; he concealed it, however, by a strong effort, under a show of just indignation, exclaiming aloud, "The Upsaroka warriors are not fools, that they should believe the idle words of a stranger boy, a spy who stole into their camp by night, and now tickles their ears with lies."

"The young Lenape must tell more," said the old chief, gravely, "before the Upsaroka can believe bad things of a warrior who has smoked and fought with them, and has taken the scalps of their enemies."

Thus called upon, Wingenund proceeded to relate distinctly the circumstances narrated in the last chapter. His tale was so clearly told; his description of the locality so accurate, that the attention of the whole council was riveted, and they listened with the most profound attention. A cloud ga-

thered upon the brow of White-Bull, and the gigantic frame of Mahéga swelled with a tempest of suppressed passion. Independently of the dangers that now threatened him, his proud spirit chafed at the thought of being thus tracked, discovered, exposed, and disgraced by a boy, and his fury was heightened by observing the bright eye of the Delaware youth fixed upon him with a steady searching gaze indicative at once of conscious truth and triumph. Still he resolved to hold out to the last; he trusted that after the great services he had rendered in battle to the Crows, they would at least believe his word, before that of an unknown youth, who came amongst them under such suspicious circumstances. These reflections passing rapidly through his mind, restored his disturbed self-possession, and enabled him to curl his haughty features into an expression of sneering contempt.

Great was the excitement among the Crows as Wingenund described, with unerring minuteness and accuracy, the dress and equipments of the stranger with whom Mahéga had held the interview, and there was dead silence in the council when the interpreter was ordered to inquire whether he knew to what tribe the strange Indian belonged.

“Wingenund knows not,” he replied; “but he heard the name that was taught to the Osage as the battle-cry of his new allies.”

“*E-chi-petă!*” shouted the impetuous White-

Bull, who had already recognised in the youth's description one of the warriors of the Black-feet, the hereditary enemies of his tribe.

"It was not so," replied Wingenund gravely. "Ka-in-na*" was the name; it was twice spoken."

A deep murmur ran round the assembly, White-Bull exchanged a significant glance with the nearest of his braves, and again a profound silence reigned throughout the assembly.

Mahéga now felt that the crisis of his fate was at hand, and that everything must depend on his being able to throw discredit on the tale of Wingenund. This was not, however, an easy task, for he suspected Besha of a secret leaning to the Delaware side, while the fierce and lowering looks of the bystanders showed him how little was wanting to make the smothered flame burst forth.

These indications did not escape the aged chief, who spoke a few words in a serious and warning tone, the purport of which was to remind them that the present council was sacred to the Medicine, and was not to be desecrated by any violence or

* The name by which the Black-feet are generally known among the Crows is "Echipeta." In their own tongue they call themselves Sikskaga." Both words having the signification of Black-feet. They are divided into three bands, the largest of which is called by the generic name abovementioned, as being that of the tribe; the other two bands are called "Piecan" or "Piegan" (the meaning of which word is not known to the Author) and Ka-in-na or "Bloody-men," which last are held to be the most fierce and formidable of the three.

shedding of blood. He concluded by saying, "Let the Washashe speak for himself, and let Besha give his words truly, if he does not wish to have his ears cut off."

Thus admonished, the horse-dealer lent all his attention to the Osage, who came forward to address the council with an imposing dignity of manner that almost made the most suspicious of his hearers doubt the truth of the accusations brought against him.

Being now in front of the semicircle, which was not more than twenty yards in width, he was directly opposite to Wingenund, who stood forward a few feet in advance of its other wing. The contrast offered by the stature and bearing of the accuser and the accused, the slight, active frame, the youth and grace of the one, and the haughty air and gigantic bulk of the other, struck Ethelston so forcibly that he could not forbear whispering to Paul Müller, "Worthy Father, does not the scene recal to mind the meeting between the Hebrew shepherd and the Giant of Gath?"

"It does, my son, and I misjudge the looks of the Osage if they part hence without the shedding of blood. I have long studied his countenance, and, however skilfully he has subdued its expression, I can trace the full storm of passions raging within his breast."

Further discourse was prevented by the commencement of the Osage's speech, which he deli-

vered with a tone and gesture of indignation, suitable to one who declared himself injured and belied.

He began by recapitulating the services that he had rendered to the Crows, the faithful warriors that he had lost in their cause, and the valuable presents concealed in the cache, to which he was even now conducting them ; on the other hand, he painted the injuries they had received from the Lenapé, who had come into their country in league with the white-skins, the bane of their tribe and race, that their hands were still wet with Upsaroka blood ; and “whose is the forked tongue,” said he, “that is to cover with lies and dirt the fame of the Great Chief of the Washashe, the sworn brother of the Upsaroka?—Who, but a boy, a stranger, a liar, and a spy, telling his idle dreams to the council to break the friendship of warriors whom his cowardly tribe, and their pale-faced allies, dared not meet in the field !”

During the whole of this tirade, which was delivered with much vehemence and gesticulation, Wingenund stood motionless as a statue, his calm eye fixed upon the excited countenance of his opponent with an undisguised expression of contempt.

Receiving no reply, Mahéga continued : “Chiefs and brothers, you are wise in council—men of experience; your ears will not be tickled with the idle songs of this false-tongued singing-bird ; a

messenger who brings such news to the Great Council of the Upsaroka—who tells them that their brother who has fought by their side, and smoked at their fire, is a forked snake, he must bring something better able to convince them than the cunning words coming from his own lying lips!"

These words, supported by the commanding tone assumed by the Osage, were not without their effect upon the minds of that fierce and deeply-interested assemblage.

Wingenund waited until the speech of his antagonist had been translated to them, when he replied, with unmoved composure, "If the Crow warriors require better witness than words, it is not difficult to find; they have already been told that the Kain-na stranger gave to Mahéga a present of a bow and arrows, which he hid in the rocks, Wingenund took them out, and here they are."

As the youth spoke he dropped the blanket that had been thrown over his left arm and shoulder, holding up to the council the bow and arrows, which all present instantly recognised as being made and ornamented by the Black-feet.

"Are the warriors yet convinced," continued the youth, raising his voice, "or do they wish for more? if they do, let them seize the Washashe wolf, they will find in his belt—"

He was not allowed to finish the sentence; the storm that had long been brooding, now burst in

all its fury. Mahéga, driven to desperation by the damning evidence brought against him, and reckless of all save the gratification of his fierce revenge, whirled his iron-pointed mace around his head, and launched it with tremendous force at Wingenund.

Never had the latter even for an instant taken his falcon eye off the Osage; but so swift was the motion with which the weapon was thrown, that although he sprung lightly aside to avoid it, the spiked head grazed and laid open his cheek, whence it glanced off, and striking an unlucky Crow who stood behind him, felled him, with a broken arm, to the ground. Even in the act of stooping to escape the mace, Wingenund fitted an arrow into the Black-foot bow which he held in his hand; and rising quick as thought, let it fly at his gigantic adversary with so true an aim, that it pierced the wind-pipe, and the point came out at the back of his neck, close to the spine. While the Osage, half strangled and paralysed, tugged ineffectually at the fatal shaft, Wingenund leaped upon him with the bound of a tiger, and uttering aloud the war-cry of the Lenapé, buried his knife in the heart of his foe. With one convulsive groan the dying Osage fell heavily to the earth; and ere the bystanders had recovered from their astonishment, his blood-stained scalp hung at the belt of the victorious Delaware.

For a moment all was tumult and confusion;

the few remaining Osages made a rush towards Wingenund to avenge the death of their chief, but they were instantly overpowered, and secured with thongs of pliant bark, while White-Bull sprang into the arena of combat, and in a voice of thunder shouted to his warriors to stand back and unstring their bows.

During the brief but decisive conflict the appearance of Wingenund was so much changed, that Ethelston declared to his friend afterwards that he should not have recognised him. The muscles of his active frame swelled with exertion, while the expanded nostril and flashing eye gave to his countenance an expression of fierce excitement, almost amounting to ferocity. Now that the struggle was over, he resumed, without an effort, the habitual quiet gentleness of his demeanour, and turning to Besha, said, "Let the Upsaroka chiefs look below the belt of that dead wolf; perhaps they will find the signal whistle of the Kainna."

The horse-dealer stooped; and searching as he was directed, found a small leathern bag, on opening which there fell out, as Wingenund had said, the whistle of the Black-foot chief; a yell of indignation burst from the assembly, some of the nearest of whom vented their rage by bestowing sundry kicks upon the inanimate remains of the treacherous Osage.

Popularity is a plant that springs up as sud-

denly, and perishes as rapidly among the tribes of the western wilderness, as among the mobs of Paris or of London ; and Wingenund, whose life would scarcely have been safe had he been found an hour earlier in the Crow camp, was now its hero and its idol. To say that the youth was not elated, would be to say that he was not human ; for he had avenged the slaughter of his kindred, and had overcome the most powerful and renowned warrior in the Missouri plains, the fell destroyer of the race of Tamenund. But so well had he been trained in the school of self-command, that neither Ethelston, nor Paul Müller, who had known him from his childhood, could trace in his demeanour anything different from its usual quiet modesty ; and they waited, with no little impatience, to see what results would ensue from his triumph in respect to their own release.

The Crow chiefs and warriors did not forget, in the excitement of the scene just described, the threatened attack to which the treachery of Ma-héga had exposed them ; and they now crowded round Wingenund, while White-Bull put many questions to him, through Besha, respecting the position and apparent numbers of the Black-feet, to all of which he answered with a precision that increased the high opinion that they already entertained of his quickness and intelligence. White-Bull even condescended so far as to explain to him his own projects for withdrawing his band from

the neighbourhood of the formidable Kainna to some more secure position. A slight smile curled the lip of the young Delaware as he said to Besha, “The council of the Crow chief does not seem good to Wingenund; if White-Bull will agree to his terms, he will place the Kainna chief, and half a score of his best warriors as captives in this camp before to-morrow at midday !”

A general murmur of surprise followed these words; and White-Bull, somewhat nettled, inquired what might be the terms proposed.

“They are,” said Wingenund, “first, that the two white prisoners shall be immediately restored to their friends; secondly, that the Osages shall be given up to the Lenapé; thirdly, that there shall be peace and friendship between the friends of Wingenund and the Upsaroka until the snow falls again upon the earth.”

The leaders having conversed apart for a few minutes, White-Bull said, “If Wingenund fails, and the Kainna take many scalps from the Upsaroka, what will happen then ?”

“They will take the scalp of Wingenund too,” replied the youth calmly.

Again the Crow chiefs consulted together for some time, and at length they resolved to agree to the terms proposed by Wingenund. The medicine-pipe was brought, and was passed from the chief to him, as well as to Ethelston and the Missionary; after which Wingenund said to White-Bull, “There

is no time to be lost; let sixty of the best warriors be chosen, twenty to go with Wingenund, and forty with White-Bull, and let one be found, very large and tall; let him put on the dress of Mahéga; Wingenund will take the whistle, and all will be ready."

A short time sufficed to collect and marshal the party; and Ethelston was, at his own earnest request, permitted to join the band led by the Delaware youth, being anxious to see the manœuvres about to take place, and Besha having made himself responsible for his fidelity.

Wingenund led the way at a swift pace, until he gained the summit of the first range of hills; nor did he slacken it until he had crossed the valley beyond, and stood upon the opposite brow of the heights, whence the Black-foot band was visible. Here he concealed and halted his party, until he had crept forward and examined all the range of hills within sight. As soon as he had satisfied himself that all was quiet, he drew his party gently on, and at length succeeded in hiding White-Bull and his forty men behind some rocks in the steepest and narrowest part of the gorge leading down to the glen below. His quick eye had noted the spot before, and a more minute inspection now convinced him that there was no other pass by which the enemy could ascend the height, and that a handful of determined men might defend it against ten times their number.

Having warned White-Bull to keep his own men close, and to stir neither hand nor foot until he heard the Lenapé war-cry, which was the appointed signal, he retreated with his own band of twenty men to the point where the interview between Mahéga and the Black-foot had taken place, which was about forty yards higher up the mountain, and where the gorge was almost as narrow and precipitous as at the pass below. Here he concealed his men among the rocks, and Ethelston primed and loaded three rifles which they had taken from the Osages, and which were now destined for the use of Wingenund and himself.

For several weary hours the youth watched in vain for the approach of the Black-feet; and any nerves less steady than his own, would have been shaken by the remembrance of the disagreeable consequences that might result from the failure of his plot. He lay, however, still and motionless as the stone upon which his elbow rested, until, just as the grey hue of evening was beginning to steal over the landscape, he descried an Indian slowly ascending the steep, followed at a distance by a long line of warriors. A low whistle from Wingenund warned his party to be ready, but he moved not, until the advancing band were sufficiently near for him to recognise in their leader the chief who had conferred with Mahéga on the preceding day.

While they were approaching in careless secu-

rity, the Crows prepared for the attack, each man being provided with a tough halter of bison-hide, in addition to his usual weapons of bow, knife, and war-club, and the leader of the Black-feet had already passed the lower gorge, (where White-Bull and his party were concealed,) ere he sounded the signal preconcerted with Mahéga. Wingenund immediately replied by a similar sound drawn from the whistle which he had secured, desiring at the same time the Crow who wore the dress of the slain Osage to show himself at the edge of the rock skirting the pass. The Black-foot chief, completely deceived, toiled lazily up the steep and narrow ascent, beckoning to his men to follow; and just as he reached the upper station Wingenund, seeing that twelve or fourteen of them were now fairly caged between the party below and his own, leapt from his concealment upon the astonished leader of the Black-feet, and dealing him a blow on the head that stunned and disabled him, shouted aloud the war-cry of the Lenapé.

No sooner was the signal uttered, than White-Bull rushed from his ambuscade, and seized the pass below; so that the unfortunate Black-feet, enclosed between the two parties, panic-struck by the suddenness of the attack, and the fall of their leader, could neither fight nor fly; and in spite of their desperate, but unavailing attempts at resistance, were all in the course of a few minutes disarmed and securely bound.

Meanwhile the main body of their comrades made a gallant attempt to force the lower pass, but it was so stoutly defended by the Crows, and was in itself so narrow and difficult, that they were soon forced to retire with loss. Neither could those who succeeded to the command bring them again to the attack. The war-cry of the Lenapé had never before been heard in these glens, and the dismayed Black-feet thought that the evil spirits were fighting against them; while to increase their terror, Ethelston and Wingenund fired two of the rifles over their heads, the bullets from which whistled past them, and the echoes of their report, prolonged by the rocks and crags around, died away at length like the muttered thunder of a distant storm. Terrified by the suddenness of the attack, and by the noise of the fire-arms, ignorant of the number, position, and even of the nation of their unexpected assailants, and fearful that another manœuvre might cut off their retreat, they fled precipitately down the mountain side, and halted not until they brought their tale of disgrace and disaster into the Kainna camp.

In the course of a few hours after the events above narrated, Wingenund and White-Bull stood together before the lodge of the aged chief of the Crows, whom the former addressed as follows:—“ My father, see there the Kainna chief, and twelve of his best warriors; they are prisoners; their life hangs upon my father’s breath; the pro-

mise of Wingenund has not been blown away by the wind."

Besha having duly translated this address, was desired by the old chief (whose astonishment was scarcely exceeded by his delight) to bestow the highest praise that he could express upon the young Delaware's skill and courage; to which effusion of complimentary eloquence he replied, " My father, Wingenund has not seen many summers; he has no skill in speech, nor experience in council; but he knows that the Great Spirit loves a single tongue, and a true heart. Mahéga was cunning as a wolf, swift as a deer, strong as a bison-bull; but there was poison in his heart, and lies dwelt under his tongue, like snakes under a smooth stone. What is the end? The mountain-buzzards pick his bones; and when his children ask,—where is the grave of Mahéga? there shall be none to answer. My father, when the sun has risen, the treaty shall be made, the pipe of peace shall be smoked, and the Medicine of the White tent shall bring many good things to the Upsaroka."

Having thus spoken, Wingenund retired to the lodge of Besha; and the captive Black-feet having been placed under a guard, White-Bull remained in consultation with his father, while the other warriors soon forgot in sleep the fatigues of the past eventful day.

CHAPTER XI.

WINGENUND AND HIS FRIENDS RETURN TOWARDS THEIR CAMP.—A SERIOUS ADVENTURE AND A SERIOUS ARGUMENT OCCUR BY THE WAY.—SHOWING, ALSO, HOW THE EXTREMES OF GRIEF, SURPRISE, AND JOY MAY BE CROWDED INTO THE SPACE OF A FEW MINUTES.

THE result of the consultation between White-Bull and his father was, that the terms of the treaty made with Wingenund should be strictly observed; but lest the ingenuous reader should be misled into the belief that this resolution was influenced by any considerations of good faith or honesty, it may be as well to inform him that the advantages and disadvantages of the two opposite courses were discussed with the most deliberate calculation, and the path of honour was at length selected upon the following grounds:—

First. It was expedient to make friends with the allied band, inasmuch as the latter were formidable enemies from their courage, skill, and equipment.

Secondly. They had many bales of cloth, blankets, and other goods, of which they would probably make liberal presents to their friends; and

Thirdly. The Crows having just incensed and triumphed over their hereditary foes the Blackfeet, they might expect reprisals from the latter; in which event, the alliance of a band commanding upwards of twenty “medicine-fire-weapons,” was not to be despised.

Having embraced this resolution, and communicated it by secret messengers to the principal braves and conjurers, the worthy sire and son summoned them to a grand council on the following morning, at which the treaty was ratified in due form; Wingenund, Paul Müller, and Ethelston representing the allied band, and each party loading the other with praises and compliments, until the oily tongue of Besha was almost weary of translating and retranslating their expressions of mutual amity and fidelity.

The four unhappy survivors of Mahéga’s band were now brought forward, their arms being securely pinioned behind them, and Besha inquired of Wingenund his wishes concerning them. It needed only a word from his lips, and they would have been stabbed, burnt, or more slowly tortured to death on the spot. The youth looked at them sternly for a moment, and Paul Müller trembled lest the vengeful instinct of his race should guide his decision; but he replied, “Wingenund will take them with him to the Lenapé camp. War-Eagle, Netis, and the Black Father

shall hold a council, and what they think best, it shall be done."

Ethelston, Paul Müller, and Wingenund now prepared to bid adieu to their Crow friends, it having been agreed that White-Bull, accompanied by some of his principal braves, should visit the Delaware camp on the following day to interchange presents, and confirm the alliance thus happily and unexpectedly commenced; and as a further proof of his friendly disposition, the Crow chief permitted Bending-willow to send a girdle of delicate fawn-skin, adorned with feathers and stained quills, to the "Great Medicine of the white tent."

Wingenund had still kept possession of the three Osage rifles, one of which was in the hands of Ethelston, and the other two he now loaded, and offered one to Paul Müller.

"Nay, my son," said the Missionary, smiling, "these hands are not skilled in the use of the firelock; neither do they desire to be acquainted with any weapon more dangerous than this oaken staff. The shedding of human blood would ill beseem a humble minister of the Gospel of Peace."

"The words of the Black Father," said the youth respectfully, "are full of goodness and truth; but he must not forget that the path lies over rough and dangerous places; that there are four prisoners, who may attempt to over-

come or escape from us, and that we may meet enemies by the way; therefore Wingenund wished to give the Black Father a weapon to defend himself."

"The motive, my son, was natural and blameless; nevertheless, I purpose to abstain from handling any deadly weapon, and to entrust my personal safety to Him who has so marvellously preserved us through trials, captivity, and dangers innumerable. My children," continued the worthy man in the English tongue, "before we depart hence to revisit our friends, let us together thank God for the great mercies shown to us; let us implore His further protection for ourselves and all dear to us; and let us humbly entreat Him, in His own good time, to soften, turn, and enlighten the hearts of these benighted children of the wilderness, so that they may hereafter, with us, be brought to His heavenly kingdom."

As he said these words the venerable Missionary dropped upon his knees, Ethelston and Wingenund kneeling beside him, while he uttered a fervent prayer, which embraced, in simple yet eloquent language, all the objects above alluded to.

Great was the surprise of the Crows at the attitude of the three, and their sudden abstraction from all that was passing around, but Besha having whispered to the chief that they were talking to the Great Spirit, he made a signal that profound silence should be observed, fearful that if

they were disturbed or anyways annoyed, they would invoke evil upon himself and his tribe.

The prayer was concluded, and they were about paying their farewell salutations to the chiefs, when the low wailing of a female voice from an adjoining lodge caught the Missionary's ear,—an ear to which the accents of distress ever found immediate entrance. Having desired Besha to inquire into the cause of her complaint, he learnt that she was the wife of the man who had been struck down by Mahéga's war-club, after it had grazed the cheek of Wingenund, and that her husband was now lying in a state of great misery and suffering. In spite of a gesture of impatience from the Delaware youth, whose feet burned to be upon the homeward path, the Missionary approached the sufferer, and carefully examined his condition. He found that the bones of the broken arm had been joined with tolerable skill and success, and that it was well secured by bandages to a straight splinter of pine-wood, but whether owing to the roughness of the treatment, or the pain he had undergone, he was now in a high and dangerous state of fever. The Missionary had still concealed in his girdle a small bag, containing, among other medicines, a few powders exactly adapted to the emergency; of these he mixed one with a little water, and having given it to his patient, left another with Besha, desiring that it might be administered at noon, and that no meat should be given to him until the fol-

lowing day. "With these remedies, and with the blessing of the Great Spirit," said he, as he retired, "the man will soon be well."

"Did I understand rightly," said Ethelston to Wingenund, "that White-Bull comes over to-morrow with his braves to complete the treaty with us, and exchange presents?"

"It is so settled," replied the youth.

"Would it not then be better to let him and his men bring with them the Crow prisoners, they are four desperate men, and only we two are armed; if they mutiny by the way, we shall be obliged to shoot them in self-defence."

"My brother does not know the Washashe and the Upsaroka," said Wingenund, smiling; "both of them love the Pale-faces and the Lenapé as the wolf loves the deer. No, my brother, let the prisoners go with us; our eyes must be open; if they try to run away or do us harm, the rifle must keep them quiet."

The youth spoke these words in a low, determined tone, and Ethelston feeling that he could not gainsay their truth, listened while Wingenund repeated the warning to the Osages in their own tongue, informing them that if they made the slightest attempt to escape, or demonstration of violence by the way, they would be instantly shot; a sullen and silent inclination of the head, signifying that he was understood, was the only reply; and once more greeting their Crow allies, the little

party moved off in the direction of the Delaware camp, Wingenund leading the way, with a loaded rifle in his hand, the Black-foot bow and quiver slung at his back, and a knife and pistol taken from one of the Osages, being fastened in his girdle; next came the four prisoners, with their arms still pinioned, but their legs entirely at liberty; Paul Müller and Ethelston brought up the rear; the latter carrying two loaded rifles, one in his hand, and the other slung over his shoulder.

It was a beautiful summer morning, the grey mists had arisen from the valley and curled in spiral folds round the rugged and precipitous rocks that frowned above it. Short and scant as was the herbage, still as it glistened in the early dew and hung forth its diamond drops in the sun, it imparted a touch of sweetness to scenery, the dreary barrenness of which might otherwise have oppressed the mind of the traveller with a feeling of desolation. Never, perhaps, over that, or over any other mountain track passed a lighter foot or a more rejoicing heart than that of our young friend Wingenund. The dreams of boyhood, dreams that a few weeks ago he had himself deemed visionary, or at least remote, were already accomplished; he had won the gold spurs of Indian chivalry; in the dance, or the council, or the field, neither envy nor detraction could now forbid his mixing with the braves and warriors of his tribe; and his heart exulted within him as he

hought of presenting to Netis and War-Eagle the scalp of their arch enemy, the insolent captor of Prairie-bird, the great warrior of the Osages, slain by his own hand. These were feelings which the boy-hero could share with none, for with Ethelston he was as yet little acquainted, and Paul Müller he knew to be averse to all thoughts of strife and conflict; still the feelings arose unchecked and unrepressed within his bosom when he remembered the name by which he was called, the deeds of those who had borne it before him; and mingled with these memories of the past came the proud reflection, that wherever the Delaware tongue was yet spoken among the scattered bands of the Ancient People on the banks of Missouri and Ohio, of Susquehanna and Miami, the song of Lenape warrior and Lenape maiden would tell how the scourge of their tribe, Mahéga, the Bloody-hand, had been slain by Wingenund, the brother of War-Eagle !

The events of the preceding days had been to the youth the realized romance of his life, and as he strode along the mountain-side, he felt as if his expanded chest were a world too narrow for the high emotions that swelled within it.

Perhaps it may seem unnatural to the reader that amidst all the excitement of awakened hope, ambition, and exultation, the youth forgot not for a moment the perils by which he was surrounded. It is our business to describe the Indian character, not as it might be, if designed "to point a moral

or adorn a tale," but as it is, with all those lights and shades which distinguish it from that of white men; and one of the most remarkable features—one which has also escaped the observation of those writers who are chiefly quoted as authority on this subject—is that power of reserved abstraction which the mind of the Indian acquires as a result of an early and constant habit of control over the will. Thus, during the wildest flight of his imagination, and the highest aspirations of his ambitious hopes, under an excitement which would have rendered an English youth of his years blind, and deaf, and careless for the moment of all that was passing around, the quick eye of Wingenund roved with incessant motion from hill to vale, embracing every hollow that might contain an ambush, and every crag near his path that might give shelter to a foe.

Ethelston conversed little with the Missionary, for there was a thought which lay close to his heart, and made its pulses throb more quickly at every step that he made towards the Delaware camp. Already they were within a few miles of it when, in passing a streamlet that flowed across their path, Wingenund suddenly turned and proposed to his companions to refresh themselves with a drink.

Passing the Osages, he came back to Ethelston, and said to him, while the Missionary filled a small tin cup with water, " My brother's eyes have been

shut, let him be ready now: one of the prisoners is free, and has almost cut the bands of a second."

Accustomed to dangers and emergencies, Ethelston did not start nor take any outward notice of the young Delaware's observation, but he replied, "It is true, I have been heedless, but it is not too late to repair the error; seize him while he is drinking, I will secure the others; do not take life if it can be avoided."

Wingenund took the hint and carried the cup round, offering a draught to each of the pinioned Osages, without appearing to notice the severed thong hanging from the wrist of the one who had freed himself.

Thus thrown off his guard, and thinking he was unsuspected, the Osage stooped to drink from the cup, when Wingenund seized him with his left hand, and presenting a pistol to his breast, said to him in his own tongue, "If you stir, you die."

Reckless of consequences, and despairing of mercy in the Delaware camp, the fierce Osage sprang upon the youth, and strove to wrench the pistol from his grasp. Being a powerful man, he might have succeeded in the attempt, had not a blow from the butt end of Ethelston's rifle laid him stunned and prostrate on the ground.

The three other prisoners, seeing their comrade's helpless condition, ceased from the violent efforts which they had been making to free themselves, and by the time that he had recovered from the

effects of the blow, his arms were pinioned more strongly than before, and the thongs by which the others were fastened were re-examined and secured.

While engaged in this operation, Wingenund showed to Ethelston a sharp flint with which the Osage had cut his own bands, and had begun to separate those of his next comrade in the line of march; a few minutes more and his hands would also have been free, in which case the task of our two friends would not have proved so easy.

Ethelston well understood Wingenund's meaning as the latter showed him the half-cut thong on the wrist of the second Indian, and he said, "I confess I was blind, my young friend, and am ashamed of myself; you will have but a low opinion of my talents as a warrior."

"My brother's eye may have wandered a little," replied the youth, smiling, "because he is not skilled in the Washashe tricks; but his heart is in the right place, and his hand knows how to strike; a few suns will rise and set before the skull of that dog forgets what my brother bestowed upon it."

"It was time to strike hard, because I did not wish to strike twice. As I had requested you not to shoot, I felt that I had made myself answerable for your safety, and if that second fellow had succeeded in freeing his hands, we might have had some troublesome work of it. But tell me, Win-

genund, how did you, while walking in front, discover what was passing behind you?"

"The Osage told me himself," replied the youth, again smiling.

"I do not understand you, for assuredly he never spoke."

"Not with his tongue, but plainly enough with his face. I looked round once or twice and my eye met his; I saw there was mischief, for he looked too good. When I passed to ask you for the cup, I looked again, quickly, but closer, and saw that his hands were free, though he kept them together as before."

Ethelston could not forbear laughing at the youth's notion of the ill-favoured Osage "looking too good," but feeling both amused and interested by his replies, he again said, "I must own my admiration of your quick-sightedness, for doubtless the Osage tried to make the expression of his face deceive you."

"He has not the face of an Indian warrior," said the youth, scornfully. "When a deed is to be done or concealed, let my brother try and read it in the face of War-Eagle, or any great chief of the Lenapé! As well might he strive to count the stones in the deepest channel of the great Muddy River,* or the stars of heaven in a cloudy night!"

* The Missouri is here alluded to, the ancient name of

The party had now struck a broad trail, leading across the valley, and up the opposite height, in the direction of the Delaware camp; the Osage prisoners were therefore sent to the front, and ordered to march forward on the trail, by which means Wingenund enjoyed the advantage of watching their movements, while he continued to converse with his friends.

"I own," said Ethelston, "that I had not before considered a command over the muscles of the countenance as being a matter of so much importance in the character of an Indian warrior."

"Nevertheless the youth is right in what he says," replied Paul Müller. "Where cunning and artifice are so often resorted to, a natural and unconcerned air of candour is an admirable shield of defence: the quickness of sight which you lately observed in Wingenund, is an hereditary quality in his race. The grandfather of Tamenund was so celebrated for it, that he was

which, "Pekitanoui," signifies "muddy water" in the language of the Illinois, once a most powerful tribe, dwelling near its confluence with the Mississippi. They have since given a name to one of the states of the Union, but not one of the tribe survives at this day. Some antiquarians think that they were formerly a branch of the great nation of the Delawares (a supposition confirmed by the resemblance of their name, Il-lenni, to that of the Lenni—Lenape); one half of which remained on the great prairies bordering the Mississippi, while the other half overran, and finally occupied, the greater portion of country between the Ohio and the Atlantic.—See Charlevoix, &c.

called by a name signifying ‘The man who has eyes in his back :’ he was killed only twenty years ago, during the fierce irruption made by a band of the five nations into the valley of Wyoming, to which the old man had retired in the hope of closing his eyes in peace.”

“ I have heard of that tragedy,” said Ethelston ; “ indeed, it occurred while I was at school on the banks of the Muskingum ; and often as the boys went or returned, they used to frighten each other with cries of ‘ The Indians !’ but I have since been much absent from my own country, and never rightly understood who were the actors in that scene of terror, and what were the tribes usually known by the name of the Six Nations, for so I have always heard them called.”

“ There were in fact only five,” replied the Missionary ; “ for although the Tuscaroras joined the confederation, they did not originally belong to it. These five are known among white men by the following names :—The Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas, and Senecas ; and it was a band of the latter that made the irruption into the valley of Wyoming. I dare say that Wingenund knows more of them than I do, for he often heard Tamenund speak of them, and he knew their history like the traditions of his own tribe.”

“ Wingenund has not forgotten,” replied the youth, “ what his grandfather taught him concerning the Five Nations. The names spoken

by the Black Father are those commonly given them ; but they call themselves otherwise."

"Tell me, Wingenund," said Ethelston, "the names by which they are known among themselves?"

"The Mohawks are called Coningionah. The Oneidas, Oni-eut-kah; or, 'The people of the standing-stone.' The Cayugas, Senanda Wanandu-nah; 'The people of the great pipe.' The Onondagas, Nundagekah; 'People of the small hill.' The Senecas, Nundawâ-gah; 'People of the big hill.' But the council name of the last is different."

"What do you mean by the council name?"

"Many of the nations have more than one name; and the council name is never spoken except by the chiefs and wise men in council; the women and boys seldom know it; and if they do, they must not speak it."

"Did Tamenund tell you the council name of the Senecas?"

"Yes; it is Oni-hoout, 'Those who shut the door;' because the Senecas live the furthest to the south-west, and guard the others from the approach of their enemies."*

* These and many other particulars respecting the Six Nations, the Author had from the lips of a veteran, who was carried off as a child by the Senecas when they sacked Wyoming. He was adopted into their tribe, and lived with them the greater part of his life, during a portion of which he acted for them in the capacity of interpreter and Indian agent : af-

"It always appeared to me," said Ethelston, turning to the Missionary, "that the variety and arbitrary alteration of Indian names present an insuperable barrier in the way of any inquiry into their national or local history."

"Certainly, my son; the difficulty is great, and proceeds from various causes:—First, because it is frequently, perhaps generally, the case among Indian nations, that the son takes the name of the mother, and not, as with us, that of the father. Secondly, there often are, as you have just learnt from Wingenund, two or three names by which the same person or tribe is designated. Thirdly, nothing is more common than for a warrior to receive a new name from any daring or remarkable feat that he may have performed, in which case his former name is dropped, and soon forgotten: and, lastly, it must be remembered, that we, Americans, Germans, and English, have obtained the greater part of our Indian nomenclature, both as to persons and places, from the French; who, in the various capacities of possessors, adventurers, missionaries, voyageurs, hun-

terwards he retired to spend a vigorous and green old age in the western part of the state of New York. He always spoke with affectionate enthusiasm of his adopted kindred, and it was easy to see that the white man's blood in his veins circulated through an Indian heart. Those who wish to know more of the early history of the Five Nations, are referred to the accurate and interesting account given of them by Colden.

ters, and interpreters, have overrun almost the whole of this continent before us."

"Is it, then, your opinion that the French travellers and writers from whom these names have been chiefly derived, have been very careless and inaccurate in their transcription of them?"

"Extremely so. When they first reached and descended the Mississippi, they called it the 'Colbert;'" afterwards, on finding what a magnificent river it became when it received the waters of the Missouri, they called it 'La rivière St. Louis,' by which name it was known for many years, until insensibly it recovered its Indian appellation. When the adventurers came to any unknown tribe, they called them by some name descriptive of the accidental circumstances under which they first saw them, and these names they have ever since retained. Thus, the Winnebagoes in the north happened, when first visited, to be drying fish in their camp, and thence obtained the pleasant name by which they are now known, 'Les Puans!' Another band, some of whom had accidentally been scorched, by the prairie and underwood near their encampment taking fire, have ever since been called 'Les Bois-brûlés;' another, 'Les Gros Ventres.*' The Dahcotah nation they have called 'Les Sioux;' the Aricara, 'Les Ris;' and so forth, until it is difficult, if not

* The Minnetarees.

impossible, to recognize any of the original Indian names under their French disguise."

"I grant this," said Ethelston. "Yet we must not forget that the English have in several instances laid themselves open to the same charge; otherwise the great nation to which our young friend belongs would not have been called after a Norman baron! But you will surely allow that the early French missionaries in North America were men of great piety, learning, and enterprise?"

"It is true, my son, many of them were so; and none can feel more grateful than I do to such of them as laboured sincerely in the service of the Gospel. Yet I am bound to say, that in the best authorised account which they sent to France from Natchez of the surrounding country,* there is so much pedantry, prejudice, and fancy, mingled with highly interesting information, that the book cannot be quoted as one possessing historical authority. A writer who gravely infers that the Mississippi Indians came from the north-eastern straits, from the identity of the Choctaws with the people of Kamchâktâ (or Royaume des Chactas), must expect that some of his other arguments and speculations should be received with diffidence.—But see, we have reached the summit of this range, and Wingenund's sparkling eye is already fixed upon the tent of Prairie-bird."

* The celebrated "Lettres Edifiantes."

"There it is!" said the youth; "they have moved it since I came away, and placed it on that point nearer the stream."

Little did he suspect what had occurred during his brief absence, as, with a foot light and elastic as his heart, he put himself at the head of his little party, and led the way swiftly towards the camp.

As the party drew near the camp they fell in with the out-piquet on guard in that quarter, consisting of one of the Delaware braves and two of his men, to whom Wingenund entrusted his Osage prisoners, adding, "Give them water and food, but let them not escape."

The brave looked full in the face of the youth, then his eye roved from the scalp at his belt to the pinioned Osages, and a grim smile played across his features; but they almost instantly relapsed into the grave and gloomy expression that they had before worn; not another word was spoken, and the three passed on towards the white tent. As they drew near, they saw a group of hunters, among whom were Pierre and Bearskin, sitting round a smouldering fire, some smoking, and others engaged in mending their moccasins or cleaning their pistols and rifles. There was neither joke nor song amongst them; and although they started up to welcome their rescued and returning friends, the latter perceived that something was wrong, and it was with aching

and foreboding hearts that they returned the friendly greeting, and passed onward towards the tent, before which they saw Reginald and Baptiste in earnest conversation.

Reginald no sooner saw them, than he sprang forward to embrace Ethelston, exclaiming, “God be praised for this great and unexpected comfort!”

Ethelston looked in his friend’s face; and its expression confirming his apprehensions, his lip grew pale and trembled; he gasped for breath, as, pressing Reginald’s hand within his own, he said, “Speak—speak! tell me what has happened?” then pointing to the tent, he added, “Is she safe?—is she well?”

“She is safe—she is well!” replied Reginald; “nevertheless—”

Ethelston heard no more, but a deep groan relieved the oppression of his heart, as he ejaculated, “Blessed be the God of Mercies!” and covering his face with his hands, stood for a moment in silence.

Reginald was surprised at this extraordinary emotion in his friend, usually so composed and calm, and at the deep interest that he took in one whom, although betrothed to his intended brother-in-law, he had not yet seen. But he added, gravely, “God knows, my dear friend, that my gratitude is not less fervent than yours. Precious as her life is, it has however been ran-

somed at a price dearer to me than aught else on earth besides herself. "Wingenund," he continued, addressing the youth and affectionately taking his hand, "you are the son of a race of heroes; is your heart firm? are you prepared to suffer the griefs that the Great Spirit thinks fit to send?"

The youth raised his dark eyes to the speaker's face; and subduing by a powerful effort the prescient agony of his soul, he said in a low tone, "Let Netis speak on; the ears of Wingenund are ready to hear what the Great Spirit has sent."

"Dear Wingenund, alas! War-Eagle, our beloved brother is—"

"Dead!" interrupted the youth letting the butt of his rifle fall heavily to the ground.

"Nay, not yet dead, perhaps worse than dead; for he is hurt beyond all hope of cure, yet suffers torture such as none but himself could endure without complaint."

It was fearful for those who stood by to witness the agonising struggle of emotions that convulsed the frame of the young Delaware on receiving this announcement; for War-Eagle had been to him not only a brother, but father, companion, and friend, the object on whom all the affections of his young heart had been concentrated with an intensity almost idolatrous; yet even in the extremity of anguish he forgot not the rude yet high philosophy of his race and nurture; he

could not bear that any human eye should witness his weakness, or that any white man should be able to say that Wingenund, the last of the race of Tamenund, had succumbed to suffering. Terrible was the internal conflict; and while it was yet uncertain how it might end, his hand accidentally rested upon his belt, and his fingers closed upon the scalp of Mahéga; instantly, as if by magic, the grief of the loving brother was crushed by the stoic pride of the Indian warrior.

“ War-Eagle is not dead; his eyes shall look upon the scalp of his great enemy slain by the hand which he first taught to use a bow; and when he goes to the hunting-fields of the brave, our fathers may ask him, ‘Where is the scalp of the destroyer of our race?’” Such were the thoughts that shot like wild-fire through the brain and through the breast of the young Delaware, as with a countenance almost haughty in its expression, he drew up his graceful form to its full height, saying “ Where is War-Eagle? Wingenund would see him. Let the Black Father go too; perhaps his healing skill might avail.”

“ I will not deceive you, dear Wingenund; no human skill can avail our departing friend. He is now within the tent; Prairie-bird watched with him all the night; she spoke to him often words from God’s own book, and they seemed to comfort him, for he smiled, and said he would gladly hear more. She has retired to take a few hours’ sleep,

then she will return and resume her sad but endearing task."

"Wingenund will go to him; but first let Netis say whence the wounds of War-Eagle came. Have enemies been near the camp?"

With the eloquence of deep feeling Reginald briefly related the circumstances attending War-Eagle's devoted and heroic defence of Prairie-bird from the bears.

Ethelston and Paul Müller listened with suspended breath, and as he concluded exclaimed together, "Noble, brave, and generous War-Eagle!" while the youth, pressing his lips together as if steeling his breast against softer impressions, said in a low tone, "'Twas well done; few are the warriors whose single knife has reached the heart of a grisly bear. Let us go on to the tent."

Reginald led the way, and, lifting the flap, entered, followed by Ethelston, Wingenund, and Paul Müller.

The chief was seated in the centre, propped by bales of cloth and fur; his sunken eye was closed from sleeplessness and exhaustion, and a blanket loosely thrown over his shoulders, covered the emaciated remains of his once powerful and athletic frame. At his side lay his favourite pipe, his war-club, knife, and rifle; while the faithful Lita, stretched at his feet, strove in vain to restore their natural warmth, by applying to them hot stones

enveloped in the shreds of a blanket, which she had torn up for the purpose. The entrance of the party was not unmarked by the wounded chief, and a smile passed over his wasted features when he unclosed his eyes, and recognised Wingenund and the two others whom he had rescued from the Crows.

"The Black Father is welcome," he said, in a faint, but cheerful voice, "and so is the friend of Netis; and War-Eagle is glad to see the face of his brother Wingenund."

We have seen how the youth had, by a desperate effort, nerved himself to bear, without giving way, the description of his brother's wounds and hopeless condition; yet when the feeble tones of that loved voice thrilled upon his ear, when his eye fell upon the wasted frame, and when he saw written upon that noble countenance proofs not to be mistaken, of torture endured, and death approaching, the string which had refused to be relaxed started asunder, and he fell senseless to the ground, while a stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

Half-raising himself by the aid of his yet unwounded arm, War-Eagle made a vain effort to move towards his young brother, and his eye shone with something of its former eager lustre, as he said, in a voice louder than he was deemed capable of uttering, "Let the Black Father lend his aid and skill to the youth; he is the last leaf on the Unâmi branch; dear is his blood to the Lenape."

"Dearer to none than to me," said the Missionary, raising and supporting the unconscious youth, "for to him I owe my liberty, perhaps my life. 'Tis only the rupture of a small blood-vessel; fear not for him, my brave friend, he will soon be better."

While Paul Müller, assisted by one of the Delawares who stood at the entrance of the tent, carried the youth into the open air, and employed the restoratives which his experience suggested, the chief mused upon the words which he had last heard, and inquired, addressing himself to Reginald, "What said the Black Father of his life and liberty being given by Wingenund?"

"Tell the Chief, Ethelston, what has befallen, and how you and Paul Müller were rescued by Wingenund. In my deep anxiety for my suffering friend, I was satisfied with seeing that you had returned in safety, and never inquired how you escaped."

Ethelston drew near to the wounded chief, so that he might distinctly hear every syllable spoken, and said, "War-Eagle, as surely as Prairie-bird owes her life and safety to your devoted courage, so surely do the Father and I owe our lives and liberty to that of Wingenund. Can you listen now, and follow me while I tell you all that has happened?"

The Chief gave a silent nod of assent, and Ethelston proceeded in the simple language of true feeling, to relate to him the events recorded in the last chapter. At the commencement of the narrative,

the Chief, expecting, probably, that the escape had been effected by some successful disguise or stratagem, closed his eyes, as if oppressed by the torturing pains that shot through his frame; but he opened them with awakened interest, when the scene of the council was described, and at the mention of Mahéga's name, he ejaculated "Ha!" his countenance assumed a fierce expression, and his hand unconsciously grasped the war-club that lay beside him.

Reginald listened with deep interest, and even Lita, who had hitherto appeared insensible to everything except the sufferings of her beloved lord, threw back the long hair from her eyes, marvelling what this might be that so excited and revived him; but when Ethelston related the catastrophe, how Mahéga had thrown his club, slightly grazing the youth, and how the latter had, in presence of the assembled Crows, killed and scalped the great Osage, the breast of the Delaware warrior heaved with proud emotions, which quelled for the moment all sense of the pains that racked his frame; his eye lightened with the fire of other days, and waving the war-club over his head, he shouted, for the last time, the war-cry of his tribe.

As the Chief fell back exhausted upon his rude pillow, the gentle voice of Prairie-bird was heard from the adjoining compartment of the tent, calling Lita to explain the meaning of the loud and unexpected cry by which she had been aroused

from her slumber. Lita withdrew ; and while her mistress made her rapid and simple toilet, informed her of the safe return of the Black Father and Wingenund, and that the latter having been seized with a sudden illness, the friend of Reginald had remained by the Chief, and had communicated some intelligence, which seemed to affect him with the most extravagant joy and excitement.

So anxious was the maiden to see her beloved preceptor, and so hastily did she fold the kerchief in the form of a turban round her head, that several of her dark tresses escaped from beneath it, and fell over her neck. The first dress that came to her hand was one made from a deep-blue Mexican shawl, of ample dimensions, given to her by the Missionary. Fastening this round her slender waist with an Indian girdle, and a pair of moccasins upon her delicate feet, she went forth, catching up as she left the tent a scarf, which she threw carelessly over her shoulders. Greeting War-Eagle hastily, but affectionately, as she passed, she flew with a glowing cheek and beating heart to the spot where the Missionary still bent with anxious solicitude over the reviving form of Wingenund.

“ My father—my dear father ! ” she exclaimed, seizing his hand ; “ God be praised for thy safe return ! ”

The venerable man embraced her tenderly, and after contemplating for a moment her countenance

beaming with filial affection, he placed his outspread hands upon her head, saying, with impressive solemnity, "May the blessing of God rest upon thee, my beloved child, and upon all near and dear to thee, for ever!"

Prairie-bird bowed her head meekly while breathing a silent amen to the holy man's benediction, and then turned to inquire of her young brother how he now felt, and of Paul Müller into the cause of his sudden illness.

Wingenund was sufficiently recovered to speak to her gratefully in reply, and to press the hand which she held out to him, but he was much reduced by loss of blood, and the Missionary putting his finger to his lips, enjoined him quiet and silence for the present. He continued, however, in a low voice to explain to her the strange events that had lately occurred, and how he and the friend of her betrothed owed to the heroism of Wingenund their life and liberty.

While the maiden listened with absorbed attention, every passage in the brief but eventful tale was legible on her eloquent countenance. As Reginald stood at a little distance gazing earnestly upon its changeful loveliness, he was startled by a suppressed ejaculation from some one at his side, at the same time that his arm was seized and pressed with almost convulsive force. He turned and saw his friend Ethelston, who, finding that War-Eagle had fallen into a tranquil sleep, had

stolen out of the tent to the side of Reginald, where he first caught a sight of the maiden as she listened to the Missionary's narrative. Reginald again observed with astonishment that his friend, usually so calm, trembled from head to foot; his eye rested upon the group with a preternatural fixedness, and his lips moved inaudibly like those of a man scarcely recovered from a trance. "Gracious heaven! what can have happened! Edward, *you* are not surely ill! that would indeed fill the cup of our trials to the brim. Speak to me, let me hear your voice, for your looks alarm me."

Ethelston made no reply, but he pointed with his finger towards Prairie-bird, and two or three large tear-drops rolled down his cheek.

While this was passing, Paul Müller had brought his tale to a conclusion, and his eye happening to light upon Ethelston, he continued (still addressing Prairie-bird), "And now, my dear child, it only remains for me to tell you the cause of our beloved young brother's weakened condition. The extremes of joy and of anguish will sometimes sweep before them the mightiest bulwarks that can be raised in the heart of man by his own unaided strength. Wingenund opposed to the stroke of affliction sent from on high not the meek, trusting endurance of Christian resignation, but the haughty resistance of human pride. Already he sees and repents his error, and the mist is clearing away from his eyes; but you, my dear child, have

been better taught; you have learnt, in all trials and in all emergencies, to throw yourself upon the mercy of your heavenly Father, and to place your whole trust in His gracious promises of protection. We are more apt to forget this duty when our cup overflows with joy than when his chastening hand is upon us; but it should not be so. Promise me, then, promise me, my beloved child, that in weal or in woe, in the rapture of joy as in the extremity of sorrow, you will strive to remember and practise it."

Awed by the unusual solemnity of his manner, the maiden bowed her head, and said, "I promise."

Scarcely had she said these words when Reginald came forward, leading his friend Ethelston, who had by a strong effort recovered from his extreme agitation, and regained something of his usual composure. "Prairie-bird," said Reginald, "I wish to make known to you, my most faithful companion, my tried and attached friend Ethelston. You must love him now for my sake; when you know him, you will do so for his own."

Leaning on the Missionary's arm, the maiden raised herself from her stooping posture to greet the friend of her betrothed. "I have heard much,—" she said, with her sweet natural dignity of manner; but she suddenly stopped, starting as if she had seen a ghost, and clinging closer to Paul Müller's arm, while her earnest gaze encountered the eyes of Ethelston fixed upon her with

an expression that seemed to shake the nerves and fibres of her heart. To Reginald their silence and agitation was an incomprehensible mystery; not so to the Missionary, who still supported Prairie-bird, and whispered to her as she advanced a step nearer to the stranger, “Your promise.” She understood him, for he heard her breathe the Almighty’s name, as Ethelston also advanced a step towards her; and again their looks dwelt upon each other with a fixed intensity that spoke of thoughts too crowded, and confused, and mysterious for expression. At length Ethelston, whose strong and well-balanced mind had triumphed over the first shock of emotion, addressed the maiden, saying, “Have the latter years been so happily spent that they have quite banished from the mind of Prairie-bird the memory of early days?”

At the sound of his voice the maiden started as if she had received an electric shock; her bosom heaved with agitation, and her eyes filled with tears.

Again the Missionary whispered, “Your promise!” while Ethelston continued, “Has she forgotten her own little garden with the sun-dial? and poor Mary who nursed, and dressed, and taught her to read? Has she forgotten the great bible full of prints, of which she was so fond; and the green lane that led to Mooshanne? Has Evy forgotten her Edward?”

“ ’Tis he—’tis he ! ’tis Eddy! my own, my long-

lost brother!" cried the maiden aloud, as she threw herself into his arms; and looking up into his face, she felt his cheek as if to assure herself that all was not a dream, and poured out her grateful heart in tears upon his bosom. She did remember her promise, and even in the first tumult of her happiness, she sought and derived from Him to whom she owed it, strength to endure its sudden and overwhelming excess.

"'Tis even so," said the Missionary, grasping the astonished Reginald's arm, "for some time I had suspected that such was the case; Prairie-bird, my beloved pupil, and your betrothed bride, is no other than Evelyn Ethelston, the sister of your friend. My suspicions were confirmed and almost reduced to certainty, during the first conversations that I held with him in St. Louis; for he, being several years older than you, remembered many of the circumstances attending the disappearance and supposed destruction of his little sister by the Indians, when his father's house was ravaged and burnt. I foresaw that they must meet when he left the settlements in search of you, and though I prepared him for the interview, I thought it better to say nothing to her or to you, but to leave the recognition to the powerful voice of Nature. You see the result in that fraternal embrace, and I have in a little bag, given to me by Tamenund, when at the point of death, proofs of her identity that would convince a sceptic, were you disposed to be

one ; the cover of a child's spelling book, in which her name is written at length (possibly by Ethelston) and a little kerchief with the initials E. E. in the corner, both of which were in her hand when she was carried off by the Indian who spared and preserved her !”

While the Missionary felt beneath the folds of his dark serge robe, for the bag which he had always carefully kept suspended by a ribbon from his neck, Reginald's memory was busy in recalling a thousand indistinct recollections of early days, and in comparing them with those of a more recent date.

“ Well do I remember,” he exclaimed, “ missing my sweet little playmate in childhood ! and how all allusion to the terrible calamity that befel our nearest neighbour and friend, was forbid in our family ! Scarcely ever, even in later years, have I touched upon the subject with Ethelston, for I saw that it gave him pain, and brought a cloud over his brow. Now, I can understand the wild and troubled expression that came across her countenance when she first saw me near the Osage camp, and first heard my voice, and how she started, and afterwards recovered herself, when I told her of Mooshanne ! How blind have I now been to everything save her endearing qualities, and the ten thousand graces that wait upon her angelic form ! See how like they are, now that a tide of feeling is poured into the countenance of my steady and composed friend !

Jealous as I am of her time, and of every grain of her affection, I must not grudge them a few minutes of undisturbed intercourse after a separation of so many years ! Come, worthy Father, let us employ ourselves in tending and ministering to War-Eagle and Wingenund, and let us not forget that to them, next to Heaven, we are indebted for the life and happiness of every single member of our miraculously re-united circle."

" You have a warm and a kindly heart, my young friend," said the Missionary, " and that is a blessing without which all the other blessings of Heaven may fall like showers upon the Lybian desert. I know how you must long to pour out your feelings of affection on this occasion to your friend, and to your betrothed ; but, believe me, you will not have done amiss by following the first promptings of your heart. Let us, as you propose, endeavour to soothe and comfort the sufferers ; Wingenund is now sufficiently recovered to listen while you relate to him these strange occurrences, only caution him not to speak too much at present. I will return to the side of War-Eagle, and although it be too late now for us to attempt any remedy for his bodily pains, who shall limit the power of the Almighty, or circumscribe the operation of His hands ? Who knows whether He may not think fit, even at the eleventh hour, to touch that stern and obdurate heart with a coal from His altar ? And, oh ! my dear young friend, if such be His

blessed purpose, I would not forego the privilege of being the humble instrument in effecting it for all the wealth, the honours, the happiness, that earth can bestow."

Reginald looked after the worthy Missionary until he disappeared within the tent, then sighing heavily, he said to himself, "If zeal, honesty, and true piety can render any human means available, assuredly that excellent and holy man's attempt will not be made in vain; and yet I fear that nothing short of a miracle can soften or subdue the stern pride of War-Eagle's spirit. How deeply anxious do I feel for the issue! for I cannot forget that it was in defence of Prairie-bird that he incurred this fearful torture, ending in an untimely death! His life sacrificed that mine might be happy with her! Where, where, my generous Indian brother, shall I find, among the cities and crowded haunts of civilized man, truth, self-denial, and devoted affection like thine! At least I will strive to fulfil the wish that I know to be nearest thy heart, by cherishing in my bosom's core thy beloved brother Wingenund!"

Thus meditating, Reginald sat down by the young Delaware, and strove, by awakening his interest in the strange events lately brought to light respecting Prairie-bird, to wean him from the deep dejection caused by his brother's hopeless plight.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTAINING A TREATY BETWEEN THE CROWS AND DELAWARES,
AND THE DEATH OF AN INDIAN CHIEF.

It is unnecessary to describe at length the occupations of the party during the remainder of this eventful day; how the re-united brother and sister called up a thousand long-stored, endearing remembrances; how they looked upon the childish relics preserved by the Missionary, and how, after interchanging a rapid but interesting sketch of each other's history, they turned again to share with him and with Reginald the melancholy and affecting duty of attending upon the dying chieftain. His sufferings were now less acute, but mortification had extended itself rapidly, and threatened hourly to terminate them altogether, by seizing upon the vitals. His mind seemed tranquil and collected as ever, only the watchful Missionary, observing that he listened more attentively to the voice of Prairie-bird than to any other, he yielded his place beside the dying man to her, entreating her to spare no efforts that might lead him, by the appointed path, to the Fountain of Mercy.

Willingly did the maiden resume the task on which she had been employed during the greater part of the preceding night; and after praying fervently for a blessing on her labours, she proceeded to explain to him again, in his own language, some of the simplest and most affecting truths of the Gospel dispensation.

What an interesting spectacle for the contemplation of a Christian philosopher! A heathen warrior, whose youth had been nurtured with tales of fierce reprisal and revenge, whose path in life had been marked with blood, war being at once his pleasure and his pride, stretched now upon the ground, still in the prime of manhood, yet with shortening breath and ebbing strength listening with deep attention to the words of hope and consolation pronounced by the lips of her who had been, through life, the secretly treasured idol of his heart. Perhaps this earthly love, purified as it had long been from passion, and ennobled by the sacrifice that he had made to friendship, was the channel through which the mysterious influences of the Divine Spirit were appointed to flow; for his eager ear lost not a word of what she uttered, and his heart was softened to receive from her lips, truths against which, if delivered by another, its early prejudices might have rebelled.

Partly by the religious creed of his race, and partly by former conversations with herself and the Missionary, he was already impressed with a

just view of the principal attributes of Deity,— His omnipotence, goodness, and eternity. The chief endeavour of Prairie-bird was now to convince him that the God of the Christians addressed the same word, the same promises and invitations to the Indians as to them, and that they also were included in the vast and mysterious scheme of redemption; for this purpose she translated for him, into the Delaware tongue, some of those magnificent passages in Isaiah wherein the Almighty, after declaring this unity and irresistible power, sends forth his gracious promises to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the isles, to the wilderness, to the inhabitants of the mountains, and those that dwell among the rocks, and concludes with the assurance, “I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.”

War-Eagle listened attentively, and gave the whole strength of his mind to the consideration of the subject propounded; some of these truths he had heard before, but they had taken no fixed root, and had rather been dismissed unheeded, than weighed and rejected. Now they presented themselves under a very different aspect; for they were pressed upon him with the most affectionate earnestness by the one whom he looked up to as

the most gifted and the most guileless of human beings; and the Black Father also, for whom he entertained the highest esteem and regard, had told him repeatedly that every truth, everything necessary for happiness after death, was written in that book from which she was now reading; that it was in short, the written command of Him whom he had from his youth addressed as the Great Spirit.

Deeply moved by these reflections (aided as they may perhaps have been by the operations of a mightier influence), the Chief propounded to his young instructress several inquiries, which it rejoiced her to hear, as they indicated a softened and teachable spirit. Neither were they difficult for her to answer, as she was familiar with almost every page of the volume before her, and thus knew where to seek at once a solution of every doubt and difficulty that occurred to her simple-minded and ingenuous patient.

While she was engaged in this interesting and truly Christian task, Reginald, Ethelston, and the Missionary sate with Wingenund, and strove to soothe and tranquillise the agitation into which the late disaster had thrown him. Although somewhat weakened by loss of blood, he had recovered his faculties both of body and mind; but all the well-meant endeavours of his friends to raise him from the deep depression of spirits into which he had fallen were exerted in vain. He

replied gently and without petulance, to various questions that they put to him, and then sank again into desponding gloom, musing over the fading fortunes of his family and of his tribe,—now about to lose him who was the pride, the support, and the glory of both.

After several unsuccessful attempts, Ethelston touched at length upon a topic which had in some degree the effect of arresting his attention and engaging the more active powers of his mind; for on reminding the youth that the Crows were to visit the camp on the morrow to interchange presents and conclude the treaty of peace, Wingenund proposed to Reginald that he should summon Baptiste and Pierre, and concert, with their advice, the course that it might be advisable to pursue.

While they were employed in considering and discussing deliberately the various plans proposed, Paul Müller and Prairie-bird continued sometimes together, and sometimes alternately, their attendance upon War-Eagle, whose strength was rapidly declining, although his intellect remained clear and unimpaired. Food he was unable to taste; but the grateful smile with which he received now and then a cup of water from the hand of Prairie-bird touched her sensibly; and there was a serene composure upon his countenance, which encouraged her to hope that his mind was in a peaceful frame, and that thoughts

of war and strife were gradually giving place to better and holier meditations.

The sun went down, evening fell, and the darkening hours of night found the maiden still unwearied at her post, seizing, with instinctive tact, every opportunity offered by his inquiries or remarks for quoting to him from the Book of Life some appropriate and consoling truth; nor did she retire to rest until she felt assured that exhausted nature had extended the boon of slumber to her suffering patient.

Not even then did the faithful Lita quit the place that she had chosen at the feet of the warrior whom she had so long worshiped in secret; noticed or unnoticed, thanked or unthanked, whether hungry, or thirsty, or sleepless, all was the same to her. In life her love had been either unknown or despised; and now the last faint glimmerings of hope were to be extinguished, without even the wretched consolation of pity. During the watches of that night there were tears upon the pillow of Prairie-bird; the eyes of Wingenund were sleepless, and his heart loaded with sorrow. Sharp and frequent were the pangs and shooting-pains that broke the rest of the departing Chief; yet was there, perhaps, none amongst them all whose sufferings were not light in comparison with the silent and hopeless anguish of the Comanche girl.

The morning dawned with all the fresh beauty of

summer in that mountain region ; and, agreeably to the resolution formed at the council held on the preceding evening, the whole party was summoned to parade with their best arms and accoutrements, so as to produce upon the Indians a due impression of their formidable strength, at the same time that various bales were unpacked, from which were selected the presents intended for the principal chiefs and braves.

No great change had taken place in the state of War-Eagle, but Wingenund had spent an hour with him alone ; during which, among other subjects of greater importance, he had mentioned the expected visit of the Crows, and the conditions of the treaty which it was proposed to make with them. To these the Chief had given his assent, and had deputed his young brother to act in his stead ; after which he turned again with renewed eagerness and anxiety to the subjects suggested to him by Prairie-bird and the Missionary.

The sun was not very high in the heaven, when the band of Crows were seen descending the hill towards the encampment. They were led by White-Bull, accompanied by Besha, and were only twelve in number, all magnificently clad in dresses of deer-skin, ornamented with coloured feathers, stained quills, scalp-locks, and the other adjuncts of Crow chivalry. Besha apologised for the scantiness of the deputation, stating, that during the past night an attempt had been made by the Black-

feet to rescue their prisoners ; and although it had not been successful, the Crows could not venture, in the neighbourhood of such dangerous foes, to weaken the defence of their camp, by sending away a large body of its best warriors. To this a suitable and complimentary reply having been made, the business of the day commenced by presenting food to the Upsaroka guests.

A circle having been made, the white hunters were ranged on one side of it, and the Delawares on the other, the former being all armed with rifles and pistols, and hunting-knives, presented a very war-like appearance; while the sinewy and weather-beaten frames of the latter, armed as they were with rifle, war-club, and scalp-knife, inspired the observant leader of the Crows with no wish to bring his band into hostile collision with such a party. In the centre were seated Reginald Brandon, Wingenund, and Ethelston, Pierre having taken his place near the latter, and Baptiste occupying his usual station beside his young master, and leaning upon his enormous hatchet. If the intentions of White-Bull were treacherous, he found no greater encouragement to his hopes from a survey of the leaders, men of powerful form, and grave, determined aspect, with the exception of Wingenund, whose youth and slight figure might have led a stranger to fear him less as an opponent. He had, however, given such proof of his skill, courage, and

activity in Indian warfare, that the Crows did not look upon him with less respect than upon the more experienced men by whom he was surrounded.

When the Upsaroka deputation had finished the portion of bison-meat set before them, Reginald gave them a treat, such as they had never before enjoyed, in the shape of a tin-cup full of coffee, sweetened with sugar, which they passed round, and tasted at first with some reluctance, owing to its dark colour, taking it for "Great Medicine." After sipping it once or twice, however, they seemed to find it more palatable, and drank all that was offered to them, and then the pipe was lighted and smoked with due solemnity.

When these preliminaries were concluded, the business of the day was entered upon, and was conducted with equal caution and distrust on both sides; Besha being, of course, the interpreter, and moulding the respective communications in the manner most likely, according to his views, to ensure the continuance of the truce agreed upon; because he had been most distinctly warned by Wingenund, that he would receive no present until all the terms of the treaty were duly fulfilled, and that then he might expect one liberal enough to adorn the wigwam of a chief. The crafty horse-dealer had, at the same time, contrived to persuade the Crows that the white men were secretly disin-

clined to the treaty, and that they could only be induced to observe it by his own cunning and contrivance.

This being the relative position of the parties, it may well be imagined that the diplomatic arrangements were neither very long nor difficult, and it was finally agreed that the Crows should, when called upon, supply the party with a trusty guide, who should lead them eastward by the route on which they would find the easiest travelling and the best supply of bison; that an alliance for mutual defence should exist between the parties so long as they were within the boundaries of the Crow country, but that they should never encamp nearer to each other than at a distance of twice the long-flight of an arrow; that so soon as they should emerge from the defiles of the mountains, the Crows should supply their allies with twenty horses, some of those which they had brought from the settlements being travel-worn and exhausted; and that Besha was to have free leave to come and go from one encampment to the other at all hours of the day or night, in the event of any communication being necessary.

The allied band agreed, in consideration of the above conditions, to present the Crows with a certain number of bales of cloth, a score of blankets, and an ample supply of beads, paint, and knives; one-third of the amount to be paid on the delivery of the horses, and the remainder when the parties

separated on the Great Prairie, at the eastern boundary of the Upsaroka country.

These terms having been written down by Reginald, he read them slowly one after the other, Wingenund repeating them to Besha, and he again translating them to White-Bull, who nodded his approbation as they were successively recapitulated, after which Reginald and Ethelston having signed their names in pencil, desired Besha and White-Bull to affix their mark.

The former did so without hesitation, but the latter made all kinds of excuses, and looked extremely puzzled, whispering his doubts and fears to his interpreter, who, being a reckless fellow, and, having seen more of the world, could scarce forbear laughing in his face.

In truth, the Crow chief, though brave and daring in the field, was not above the superstitions current in his tribe, and he entertained a kind of vague notion that, by putting his mark upon the paper, he brought himself under the power of the white-man's medicine.

Nevertheless, he was at length persuaded, and drew upon the paper, with a hand not unskilful, the broad forehead and projecting horns of a bison's head, which design represented his consent to the treaty.

No sooner was the business concluded than the presents were brought forth, and distributed according to the terms prescribed, Reginald adding

for the chief a hair-brush, in the back of which a small mirror was set. Never had such a curiosity been seen in the Crow country, and White-Bull turned it over and over in his hand, contemplating it and himself in it, with undisguised satisfaction, while Pierre whispered to Baptiste, "If Madame Bending-willow is in favour, she will have it before to-morrow!"

The Crows now took their leave, amid many protestations of friendship on both sides, and returned with all speed towards their own encampment, White-Bull's mind being divided between delight at the possession of his brush, and dread at the mysterious dangers he might have incurred by putting his mark upon the white-man's paper.

The departure of their wild allies left the party at the camp leisure to return to their ordinary avocations, and to the sad recollection of their Chief's condition; indeed, a very short time elapsed before he sent a message by Paul Müller desiring that they would all come to him without delay.

The tone of deep, yet composed sadness, in which it was delivered, announced to most of those who heard it that War-Eagle was drawing near to his end; and Reginald, passing his arm within that of Wingenund, whispered to him as he went such words of sympathy as he thought most like to soothe and console him.

"Dear Netis," replied the youth, in a tone of

the deepest melancholy, "you are very good, but there is no happiness more for Wingenund!"

"Say not so, my young brother; you are still in the early spring of life, and I hope, when these present sorrows are past, you will yet enjoy a long and happy day of summer."

"Wingenund's spring and summer are both gone! but he does not complain; it is the will of the Great Spirit, and Wingenund knows that what He does is right."

As he said these words they reached the tent, and the day being extremely fine the poles of that compartment were taken up, and the canvas folded back, at the request of the Chief, that he might once more look upon the sun, and feel the fresh mountain breeze upon his cheek.

Lita had retired into the inner tent, and Prairiebird was seated at his side, a cup of water being the only source of relief to which she from time to time had recourse to cool his lips and recruit his ebbing strength.

The whole party being gathered round him, Wingenund, Reginald, and Ethelston somewhat in advance of the rest, he addressed the former in a low but distinct voice, saying, "War-Eagle is going on the dark path, from which he will not return; Wingenund will be chief of the Lenape band; has he anything to say while War-Eagle is yet Chief?"

"He has," replied the youth, in a voice tremulous from emotion; "a treaty has been made with

the Upsaroka, does War-Eagle think it good?" He then proceeded to enumerate its several terms and conditions.

"It is good," said the Chief, after a few moments' reflection; "only let Netis and Wingenund remember that the Upsaroka are double-tongued; they hate the Blackfeet, and will be glad to spend my brother's powder and blood in destroying their enemies. Let my brothers keep near the home-path, and not wander from it to please the Upsaroka. Is there more that my brother wishes to say?"

"There is more, my brother. Here are the four Osage captives taken among the Upsaroka. Their deeds of blood are known to War-Eagle; let him say what shall be done with them."

"Let them stand forward," said the Chief, raising himself with difficulty from the blanket-cushion against which he had been reclining.

They were accordingly brought to the front of the circle, and stood awaiting their doom with the fierce determined air of warriors who knew and feared it not. The eldest among them was a fine powerful man, who bore about him the marks of many a fray, and had been one of the leading braves who followed the fortunes of Mahéga. He it was who acted as spokesman in the dialogue that ensued.

War-Eagle. "Have the Washashe anything to say that their lives should not be given to the slow fire?"

Osage. “The warriors of the Washashe talk with their hands, when their hands are not tied. They are not famous for their tongues.”

W. “Yet with their tongues they spoke smooth words to the Lenapé; they called them brother; they ate, hunted, fought, and smoked with them, and then joined the Dahcotahs, to kill the women and children of their friends. If the tongues of the Washashe are not famous, they are forked.”

O. “Mahéga was the war-chief of his tribe; when he went upon the war-path, the Washashe followed. He is gone to the hunting-fields of the braves, and they are not afraid to follow him. When War-Eagle took his rifle and his club, and went out upon the war-path by night, his warriors followed in silence. Who among them said, ‘Where does War-Eagle go?’”

W. “War-Eagle never raised his rifle at a friend; he never called out his braves to burn the wigwam of his brother; there was never a scalp of woman or child taken by his hand. When he struck it was at an open foe, or to save or avenge a friend.” He added, in a subdued tone, “And yet there is too much blood on the hands of War-Eagle; the Great Spirit is angry with him for it.”

The Osage made no reply. The Missionary interchanged a whispered word with Prairie-bird, and the Chief continued, addressing chiefly the Delawares in their own language. “My brothers, we often pray to the Great Spirit to forgive what

we have done that is wrong. The Black Father and Olitipa have told War-Eagle the answer that He gives ; it is written in the great book, in which there are no lies, ‘The Great Spirit will forgive us, if we forgive our brother ; if we refuse to forgive our brother, the Great Spirit will refuse to forgive us.’ War-Eagle has done many things wrong ; he hopes the Great Spirit will forgive him. Shall he now kill the Washashe ?” He then turned to the prisoners, and said, “ Let their bands be cut, and let them return to their own people to tell them, that the Lenapé hurt not women nor children, nor men whose hands are tied. Olitipa has read from the Book that such is the will of the Great Spirit, whom the white men call by the name of God, and the heart of War-Eagle tells him that it is true.”

It is doubtful whether this speech caused greater surprise among his own followers, or among the Osages whom it restored to life and liberty. Both, however, heard it with that absence of outward emotion which characterizes the red-skin race in North America ; so that Ethelston, who did not understand a word of the Delaware tongue, was perfectly unconscious of anything having been said that might materially affect the fortunes of the prisoners ; and he was in momentary expectation of seeing them led away to suffer according to the laws of Indian retribution, the deserved penalty of their cruelty and treachery.

While Pierre was informing him of what had occurred, the Osage spokesman resolved apparently to try the patience of the expiring Chief to the uttermost, and said to him, with a sneer, "War-Eagle is very good to the Washashe; he knows that they have neither food nor arms; there is not one knife among the four. They are among the mountains, a whole moon's journey from their village, surrounded by war-parties of the Upsaroka and Blackfeet, and on their return-path must pass the hunting-grounds of the Shiennes, the Kiowás, the Pánis, and the Mahas. War-Eagle would rather that they were starved, and their bones gnawed by the wolves, than see them die like warriors, and laugh at the Lenapé in their death."

Paul Müller looked anxiously at the Chief to mark what effect would be produced by this ungrateful and intemperate speech; and his apprehensions were much relieved when he heard War-Eagle reply, in a calm and unmoved tone, "There is no wonder that the Washashe think others are like themselves, false-hearted and double-tongued. Had the Lenapé intended that the Washashe should be killed, they would have spared the Upsaroka and the wolves the task. War-Eagle intends that they should live to be ashamed of their bad deeds. Wingenund will see that they enter safely on the home-path. Now let them go; their words are bitter, and they can neither speak nor believe

the truth. War-Eagle has no more time to waste with them."

As he uttered this reproof in a contemptuous, rather than an angry tone, the Chief fell back much exhausted upon his cushion, and the leading Osage was about to make some violent reply, when Pierre, taking him by the arm, hurried him and his companions to the outer edge of the circle, saying to him as he went, "Peace, fool! Is thy thick head so fond of tasting a Lenape tomahawk, that thou canst not hold thy tongue, when thy saucy wagging of it might cost thy life. Peace, I say, or in spite of the Chief's pardon, I will have thee and thy comrades tied down again like fresh caught colts."

Having spoken words to this effect to the reckless and grumbling Osage, Pierre re-entered the circle gathered round the Chief, and found, on his return, that a general silence prevailed. Wingenund was sitting upon the ground, close to his brother, listening with the deepest attention to the injunctions and counsel which the latter was delivering, in a voice that became every moment more feeble and indistinct. None present could overhear what passed; but at the conclusion the two brothers sat for a few seconds in silence, each pressing his clenched hand upon the heart of the other, after which Wingenund retired a few paces back, while the Chief, collecting his remaining strength, said aloud to his devoted followers, "War-Eagle is

going to the land where his fathers dwell ; he is sorry to leave his brothers, but it is the will of the Great Spirit, who is the Master of Life;* and when He speaks the Lenapé are silent, and obey. When War-Eagle is gone, it is his wish that Wingenund should be chief of the band ; the blood of Tamenund warms his heart, and though he has not seen many summers, his eyes have not been shut, nor have his ears been closed against the counsel of wise men. My brothers, you have the care of a great treasure, the care of Olitipa, the beloved daughter of Tamenund, the sister who has cleared away the cloud that hid the sun from War-Eagle, and the thorns that beset his path in the dark valley. My brothers, let not one of you leave her until she is safe at the white man's boundary ; and if you love War-Eagle, you will also love and

* In the greater number of the Indian languages known on the North American continent, the Supreme Being is designated by a name bearing one of the three following significations :—

1. "Great, or Good Spirit;" such is the "Manitou," "Manitto," "Kitche-Manitou," &c., of the Delawares, Chippeways, Sâkis, Pottawatomis, and most of the Algonkin tribes.

2. "The Wonderful, or Wonderful Spirit," by which name He is designated among most of the tribes resident on the banks of the Missouri ; e. g. "Wahcondah" by the Otoes and Omahaws, "Waheatunca" by the Daheotahs, "Ma-na-kôpa" by the Minnetrees, &c.

3. "Master of Life," which is the signification of the name by which the Almighty is recognised among the Pawnees, and many other numerous and powerful tribes. The subject is too comprehensive to be more than briefly alluded to in this place.

obey Wingenund, and Netis his adopted brother."

A deep suppressed murmur was the only reply made by the gloomy warriors around; but War-Eagle knew its import, and read its confirmation on the determined countenances of those, who had so often followed him to strife and victory.

The mortal agony was at hand, and the Chief, feeling its approach, looked suddenly round as if he missed some one who should be there; his utterance was scarcely articulate, but Prairie-bird caught the intended sound of Lita's name, and flying into the tent, speedily returned, bringing with her the weeping girl. Again he contrived to make Prairie-bird understand his wish, that an armlet of beads that he wore should be taken off and hung round Lita's neck; the Chief smiled and said, "Lita has been faithful to Olitipa and very good to War-Eagle; the Great Spirit will reward her."

The destroyer was now rapidly tightening his fell coils round the vital organs, but the Chief still retained sufficient strength to press the hand of each of his sorrowing friends in succession against that generous heart which must so soon cease to beat. Wingenund was the last, and as he stooped over his brother, whispered to him a word that reached the ear of Prairie-bird, and while it richly rewarded her pious and affectionate toil, lighted up at the same time the countenance of the dying

man with a smile of triumph that bid defiance to the pangs of the grisly King of Terrors. From the time that he received his fatal wounds, not a groan nor murmur of complaint had escaped him, and when he resigned his parting breath it was with the peaceful tranquillity of childhood falling asleep.

"My children," said the Missionary, solemnly, "War-Eagle, the son of Tamenund is no more! In life none walked more uprightly than he, according to the light that was given to him! He gave up his life to save that of another, and after enduring grievous pains with the heroism of an Indian warrior, he died with a full hope and trust in the redeeming mercy of his God. Peace be with his soul; and may we all rejoin him hereafter in the land where separation and sorrow will be unknown!"

CHAPTER XIII.

WAR-EAGLE'S FUNERAL.—THE PARTY COMMENCE THEIR HOME-WARD JOURNEY.—BESHA EXERTS HIS DIPLOMATIC TALENTS FOR THE LAST TIME, AND RECEIVES SEVERAL REWARDS, WITH SOME OF WHICH HE WOULD WILLINGLY HAVE DISPENSED.

IT may well be imagined what a gloom was cast over the whole party by the death of the Delaware leader; not only among those who, like Reginald, Wingenund, and Prairie-bird, mourned for him as for a departed brother, but even among the rough hunters and woodsmen, to whom he had endeared himself no less by his dauntless courage than by a thousand acts of kindness and generosity. As for his own trusty Lenape warriors, their spirit seemed entirely broken; too proud to weep or lament, they walked to and fro by the spot where his remains still rested, casting upon the dark cloth by which they were covered, desponding and melancholy looks; and when Baptiste, whom they esteemed as the long-tried friend of their late Chief, tried to offer a few words of consolation, hinting also at the virtues and qualities of the surviving brother, they shook their heads and returned to cherish their grief, like the wife of Phinehas, who when

she heard that her husband and her father-in-law were dead, and the Ark captured, regarded not the consolation of her new-born child, but called it Ichabod, saying “The glory is departed from Israel.”

“Ethelston,” said Reginald to his friend, “methinks the sooner we strike our camp and move from this sad spot the better; it is necessary, from the progress that mortification had made in the frame of our lamented friend, that he should be buried immediately. Let us speak to Wingenund, and see whether he wishes it performed according to our customs or according to those of his own people; for in this we ought not to dictate to him.”

Having joined the youth, whom they found standing in an attitude of dejection at no great distance, Reginald, after a few words of kindly sympathy, proposed to him the subject under discussion. To the surprise of both, they found him quite prepared for it. “Yes,” he said; “War-Eagle said to Wingenund what he wished, and it shall be done this day. First let us obey his commands about the Washashe, let them be called before the tent, and let the hunters and the Lenapé be summoned too.”

This was soon done, and the party being assembled, the Osages were once more brought forward, their limbs having been freed from the thongs by which they had been bound; and the general stock

of meat, fresh as well as dried, was also, by desire of Wingenund, placed before the tent. These preliminaries being completed, the young chief addressed them as follows : “ Washashe, it is known to you that War-Eagle, forgiving your bad deeds, gave you your lives—the Lenapé respect the wishes of their great Chief, and will not send you away with empty hands.” He then desired that a fair proportion of meat, a rifle, with a reasonable supply of ammunition, a knife, and a small package of Indian presents should be given to each of the Osages. These orders having been punctually, though reluctantly, obeyed by one of the Delaware warriors, Wingenund continued, “ If the Washashe fear to enter upon the long home-path, with so few men, they may camp under the shelter of the Lenape fires—they cannot be called brothers, but no harm shall be done to them.”

“ The Washashe,” replied the powerful Indian who has before been mentioned as the spokesman of the Osages, and who now grasped his restored rifle with an air of fierce exultation ; “ the Washashe have no fear—they will go upon the path alone—they will not dwell a night by the fires of the Lenape camp. Wingenund is a young chief, and the Lenapé need not be ashamed when they speak his name ; his words and his years are few, but his deeds will be told where the council of warriors meet. His hand is open—but it is red with the blood of their great chief; the Wash-

ashe thank him, but they cannot call the Lenapé brothers. The Washashe have no more to say; before the night falls, their feet will be far on the homeward path."

So saying, the grim warrior stalked away with his three companions, the assembled party looking after them in silence, until their forms were lost behind a rock that projected into the valley.

"Proud and thankless scoundrels," muttered Baptiste, half aloud to the hunter who stood nearest to him. "Had my opinion been taken, they should have been flogged with cow-hides out of the camp, and they might have found their way as they could to their cut-throat friends the Dahcotahs! 'Twas always so with War-Eagle, and will be the same with Wingenund! When the skirmmage was over, and his blood was cool, there was no more cruelty in his natur' than there is in that of a Philadelphia Quaker."

Wingenund having spoken for a few minutes with the Missionary, a party of half a dozen men were desired by the latter to dig a grave for the deceased Chief under a scathed and picturesque pine that stood alone on a small natural mound near the river. It was a spot that seemed to have been framed by the hand of the Creator for a sepulchre, rising as it did in the centre of a wild and unfrequented vale, surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, beyond which rose in the distance the snow-clad summits of the gigantic

mountain-range—the fittest natural emblem of Eternity; while, round the base of the mound, flowed the bubbling stream, a memento, no less apt, of the changeful and fleeting nature of all the things belonging to this earthly scene.

The descending sun was just beginning to gild the peaks of the Western Andes when the party assembled to pay the last tribute of affectionate regard to the mortal remains of their late leader. Prairie-bird and her faithful Lita attended, both having their faces veiled by a shawl, and the former supported by her newly-restored brother; nor was there one of the party absent from the mournful ceremony, which was commenced (as soon as the body, still enveloped and bound in dark cloth, was placed near the grave) by a brief address from Wingenund, in which he said,

“ My brothers know that War-Eagle was a great chief; that the blood of many warriors ran in his veins. The enemies of the Lenapé were his enemies, and their friends his friends. When their warriors went forth to battle, he was not the last; and when they returned, his war-club could tell a tale.” A deep murmur of assent was uttered by the Delawares, and Wingenund continued:—“ War-Eagle loved the Lenapé from his childhood; and in his last moments he prayed to the Great Spirit for their happiness. He also told Wingenund that Olitipa and the Black Father had

read to him many wonderful things from the Great Spirit's Book ; that he had thought much of them, and found them very good, and very true. They had made his heart so glad, that he wished Wingenund and his Lenape brothers to hear them, that they might learn how to please the Great Spirit, and to obey his will. Wingenund promised War-Eagle, that when the Black Father told them the commands of the Great Spirit written in the book, the ears of the Lenapé should be open to listen to the words of his wisdom, and to let his counsel guide their feet. My brothers, such were the wishes of War-Eagle, great chief of the Unâmi band of the Ancient People. Wingenund has told them truly, and he intends to obey them himself; his years are yet too few, that he should advise others; let each of my brothers think of these things wisely, and act as the Great Spirit shall incline his heart."

A long and profound silence followed this speech; after which Paul Müller, approaching the mound, desired that the body might be lowered into the grave; when this was done, he addressed first the Delawares, setting forth the virtues of the deceased chieftain, and laying the greatest stress upon those which were of a more mild and peaceful character. He touched also most feelingly upon the occasion on which he had received the injuries from which he died; assuring the Delawares that no length of time, nor changes of

life, would ever efface from the memory of Prairie-bird, or those to whom she was so dear, the devoted heroism of her deliverer. "But, my beloved brothers," said he in conclusion, "great as was the gift that he gave to her, even his life for hers, he received from her a gift much greater; for it is my humble hope and belief, that through her entreaty and prayer, his eyes were open to see things that he had never seen before; and, having once seen their riches and their beauty, he desired that you, my brothers, should see them too. He learnt what, I fear, you cannot yet understand,—that it is the will of the Great Spirit, that we should observe and study his works, and copy them. Is it true, my friends? Is there sense in my words?"

He paused for a reply. The elder Delawares looked at each other, and then, as if by mutual consent, nodded their assent.

The Missionary continued:—"Well, then, the Great Spirit is merciful and just, kind and forgiving; loving peace and hating strife. How do we try to please him? By hating peace, and being swift to shed blood; by revenging where we ought to forgive, and dealing harshly by those on whom we ought to have mercy. The Osages who are just gone are wicked men; they have been guilty of treachery and cruelty, and you are disappointed that you were not permitted to kill them, and that Wingenund sent them away unhurt. They have

been wicked, far more wicked, towards the Great Spirit; they have disobeyed His commands, despised His laws, destroyed the creatures of His hand, and have insulted Him and braved his anger for weeks, and months, and years! How has He treated them? He has given them water from His clouds, and has brought the herds of bison to their hunting-ground, and has given the sun to warm them by day, and the moon and stars to light their path by night! And if even now one of them—nay, the very worst among them, were to have his heart softened, and to turn to the Great Spirit, and to say, ‘My Father, in heaven, I am sorry for all the wrong that I have done, O forgive and guide me, for I wish to do so no more!’ it is written in that book by the hand of the Great Spirit himself, that He would forgive that sorrowful man, and bless him, and turn the bitterness of his heart into gladness and joy sweeter than honey! These things, my dear brothers, are not learnt in a day; but, I thank God that by His blessing, and the affectionate and patient labours of Olitipa, the eyes of War-Eagle were opened to see them; and he desired that those whom he most loved should see and feel them like himself. We will now take our last farewell of him on earth, after the manner of those who love, fear, and obey the word of the Father of us all.”

Having thus spoken, the worthy Missionary

knelt by the side of the newly-filled grave, and concluded the solemnities of the occasion by an affecting prayer in the English tongue ; Reginald, Ethelston, and all the hunters and woodsmen, kneeling uncovered, and finally joining in that perfect model of supplication taught by the Redeemer himself to those who, in whatever age or clime, are called by His name.

Having paid these last honours to their departed friend, the leaders of the party withdrew to make the proposed arrangements for striking the camp on the following morning, and for settling the line and order of march.

The Delawares lingered for some time, as if unwilling to leave the remains of their beloved Chief, and at length slowly retired, one by one, until there remained only our old friend Baptiste and a veteran Delaware, who, from his feats of hardihood, and the stern fierceness of his nature, was generally known by the name of Stony-heart.

“Grand-Hâche,” said the latter, addressing his companion, “it may be all very good what the Black Father says, but Stony-heart does not understand it. When War-Eagle said that the Lenapé should not kill those who had taken the scalps of their warriors or of their women, the Mad Spirit must have got into his brain ! Stony-heart has seen many winters, and has heard the talk of the wise men in council, but he never heard such words as these !”

It must be confessed that Baptiste was not in his heart a very strong advocate for the doctrine of forgiveness; we have already seen in a former chapter, that he was rather disposed to favour the Indian law of retaliation; he answered, however, on this occasion cautiously.

“Stony-heart speaks true; yet he must remember that War-Eagle only desired that his Lenape brothers should hear what the Black Father had to say on this matter; they can then decide whether his words are idle or not. It will be easier for him to persuade the young than men who like us have known for forty winters that the custom of the woods, and of the prairie, is life for life, and scalp for scalp !”

“It will,” rejoined the other; and “Grand-Hâche will see that no good will follow from having spared the lives of those four Washashe dogs !”

With this prophetic observation, Stony-heart rejoined his comrades, and Baptiste joined the small group assembled before the door of the tent.

On the following morning the party began their homeward march, Wingenund leading the way, followed by his Delawares, and accompanied by Besha and the Crow guide, who had been sent for by a runner before daybreak. The packed mules and horses were placed in the centre under the special charge of Monsieur Perrot, whose fund of good-humour and resource had never failed him, and who now performed the office of a muleteer with the same readiness with which he fulfilled the

respective duties of valet to Reginald, and cook, messman, and buffoon to the whole party. The rear was brought up by Ethelston and Reginald, the latter still keeping his post at the bridle of Nekimi, the line of march being closed by Baptiste and some of the most experienced hunters, while Pierre was sent forward to aid Wingenund, he being the most skilful and practised in the peculiar difficulties of the dangerous region which they were now about to traverse.

For several days all went on as well as could be expected. The heat was intense, and water was sometimes scarce; several of the mules and pack-horses dropped down from exhaustion, and were left behind; the stock of provisions was somewhat short, but the party twice fell in with a small herd of buffalo, from which they procured a tolerable supply; and, at camping time, they all assembled round the fire in front of Prairie-bird's tent, and, after their frugal evening meal, wore away the time with conversation suited to the different groups into which the party divided itself, some talking over former campaigns, others cracking their jokes and enjoying the laugh which invariably followed Perrot's determined attempts to explain himself in the Delaware tongue; while Reginald, Ethelston, and Prairie-bird lived over again the days of their childhood, or recounted to each other some of the most interesting incidents of the intervening years.

All remarked the changed aspect and increased

gravity of Wingenund; his manner was indeed gentle and quiet as before, but the death of his brother, and the responsibility now entrusted to him, added to other serious matters which occupied his mind, seemed in him to have annihilated the interval between early youth and ripened manhood. First to rise before daybreak, and last to lie down at night, he seemed unconscious of fatigue, and resolved that on this occasion at least, the Delawares should not from his neglect be reminded of the loss that they had so lately sustained. At night he visited the sentries and saw that every one was at his allotted post, and on the march, whenever the nature of the ground rendered precaution necessary, scouts were sent forward to examine it, and to guard against ambush or surprise. Every evening he joined the little party before the tent, and never left it without wishing his sister (as he still called Prairie-bird) a night of rest, and asking a blessing from the lips of the Black Father.

The Crows behaved upon this occasion better than had been expected of them, camping always at a certain distance from the allied party, and observing faithfully the other conditions of the treaty. The Guide whom they had supplied led the way towards the Great Prairie, by a valley considerably to the northward of that by which they had entered the mountain region, and Pierre soon perceived that its eastern termination was at a spot that was easily recognized, by all experienced trap-

pers, as the “Devil’s Kettle,” owing to the steam that ascended from a hot-spring, celebrated for its medicinal qualities among the neighbouring tribes.

Here the fresh horses promised by the Crows were supplied, and an equal number of those exhausted and incapable of further travel, were left behind. Nekimi alone of the whole quadruped band, seemed insensible alike to the scantiness of pasture, and the heat and fatigue of the journey. The fair burthen that he bore was as that of a feather compared to the powerful frame of his former rider when armed and equipped, and the noble animal seemed desirous of expressing his gratitude for the change by rubbing his forehead against Reginald as he walked before him, or nibbling out of his hand a few young shoots of alder or willow that he was now and then fortunate enough to cut by the half-dried bed of some mountain stream.

In this way they travelled forward without accident or adventure, until they reached the banks of a river of considerable size, which Pierre conjectured to be the head-water of the southern-fork of the Neosho, or the Platte, and here they were to complete the terms of the treaty, and bid adieu to their Upsaroka friends, the opposite bank of the river not being considered within the limits of their hunting ground.

The ceremonials observed upon this occasion were much the same as the preceding, with the

exception that Bending-willow paid a visit to Prairie-bird, received from her several presents, drank a cup of the wonderful black liquor, of which her husband had told her, namely, coffee sweetened with sugar, and told her fair hostess that his affections had not as yet strayed to any other of his spouses,—a fact the truth of which was attested by her displaying, with the most ostentatious coquetry, the mirror-backed brush, of which he was more proud of than of anything that he possessed.

Besha made himself wonderfully busy during the payment of the presents due to the Crows; and in one or two instances when the latter claimed more than was recorded in Reginald's memorandum, he stoutly maintained that the white men were right, and recommended the Crows to withdraw their pretensions; in so doing he did not neglect to whisper every now and then to Baptiste or Pierre, a hint that he intended to be paid for his disinterested support.

All this was not lost upon White-Bull, who, although he could not understand a word of what passed, felt nevertheless convinced that the interpreter was playing some under-game. He said nothing, however, and the distribution was satisfactorily completed, Wingenund and Reginald adding gratuitously several presents for the chiefs beyond those promised in the treaty. Besha, to the surprise of many of the Crows who knew his

avaricious disposition, went away, apparently well satisfied, with nothing more than a blanket and a knife; but they did not know that he had privately whispered to Baptiste that he would come by night to fetch away his stipulated share of the presents (and that too a lion's share), as the Crows might be jealous if they saw them, and might take them from him.

The two parties having taken their final leave of each other, the task of guide devolved upon Pierre, who resolved not to cross the Platte that evening, it being now rather late, but to encamp where they were, while the Crows returned some dozen miles upon their trail before they encamped for the night. They had seen enough of the effective force and discipline of the allied band to deter them from attacking it, and prudently resolved to return to their own country with the goods which they had already acquired without loss or risk; although it becomes us, as veracious historians, to state (however little credit the statement may reflect upon White-Bull) that it had been, from the first, his intention to attack and plunder the party, had their carelessness or neglect afforded him an opportunity of doing so with impunity.

Besha having ascertained the spot selected for the Crow encampment, lingered behind their line of march, accompanied by the lad before-mentioned as being his constant attendant, whom he left

concealed, with two of his horses, behind a small hillock beside the trail, desiring him there to await his return. In order to avoid suspicion, he continued in the company of White-Bull until it was dusk, and did not leave the camp until an hour later, when he threw a large dark-coloured blanket over his shoulders, and slipping away unperceived, rejoined the lad left in charge of the horses.

Mounting one himself, he desired his companion to follow on the other, and trotted briskly forward, under the partial light of a young moon, over the ground which he had carefully noted during the day, until he reached a spot where the trail approached within a hundred yards of the banks of the Platte, and where a few alder bushes offered convenient shelter for the horses. Here the lad was again desired to await his master's return; and as the dew began to fall heavy, he was not sorry that the latter left with him the large dark-coloured blanket above-mentioned.

Besha now pursued his way on foot; and on reaching the outposts of the allied band found, as had been preconcerted, two of the Delawares, bearing several large packages, containing the presents and goods that he had earned in his mixed capacity of diplomatic agent and interpreter. The packages being inconvenient for the horse-dealer to carry alone, both on account of their weight and number, he prevailed upon one of the Dela-

wares to assist him in carrying them to the spot where he had left the horses. It was only by offering the Indian, who was no other than Stony-heart, a little bag full of excellent kinnekinnik for his pipe, that he prevailed upon him to undertake this task. But the materials for smoking had become scarce, and it was an indulgence from which, when within reach, Stony-heart could not refrain; he accordingly sent back his companion, and, telling him that he would return in the course of an hour or two, set forth with the horse-dealer on the trail.

We must now see how it fared with the lad left in charge of the horses, who, being tired with the day's march, fastened the end of their long halters to his arm, and wrapping himself in the blanket, lay down upon the grass, and soon fell into a comfortable doze. One of the horses probably disliking this unusual separation from those with which it was accustomed at this hour to feed, neighed several times aloud, for which disturbance of his slumber it received a pull of the halter, and a muttered execration from the youth, when he again fell into a state of unconsciousness.

Now it so happened that the neighing of the horse reached other ears at no great distance, being those of no less a person than the Osage, who, with his three companions, was on his home-ward way, and had on the preceding day stolen an old canoe that they found on the bank of the

river; and after patching up a few rents and holes, had embarked in it to save themselves a portion of their long foot journey. They had seen from a distance the moving bands of the white men and of the Crows, and had hauled their canoe under some alder bushes on the bank, in order to consult and determine whether they should drop further down the river during the night, or leaving it, strike a more southerly course.

Whilst holding this consultation, the neighing of Besha's horse caught the quick ear of their leader; he listened—and hearing it repeated, crept towards the spot, followed by his three companions. As soon as the uncertain light of the moon enabled him to distinguish the two pack-horses fastened to the sleeping lad, he again crept noiselessly forward, and springing upon him, enveloped him in his own blanket, stuffing the corner of it into his mouth, so that he could neither struggle nor make any noise.

Leaving one of his men in charge of the horses, he carried the youth swiftly to the water's edge, where he securely pinioned and gagged him, not, however, before he had recognised by the moonlight the countenance of Besha's attendant. The Osage's plan was soon formed; for he rightly conjectured that the horse-dealer was gone upon some errand, from which he would not return empty handed; and he also owed the horse-dealer a grudge for having, as he supposed, favoured

Wingenund in that eventful scene which terminated Mahéga's life.

Stripping the youth of his dark blanket and of the broad-brimmed hat of Mexican grass that he wore, the Osage put them on himself; and taking his seat by the same bush, he held the halters of the horses, and partially concealing his face in one of the folds of the blanket, awaited in this disguise the return of the horse-dealer, while his three companions concealed themselves behind the adjacent bushes.

They had not been very long ensconced before Besha appeared, followed by the doughty Stony-heart, who muttered to himself as he came that he would not carry such a load so far again for all the kinne-kinnik in the camp. The horse-dealer as he drew near gave the usual signal-whistle for his attendant; and finding that it was unanswered, looked towards the spot, where he descried the slumbering figure in the slouched hat and dark blanket; while one of his pack-horses, lately cast loose, seemed to be deliberately walking off to seek better pasture. Hastily throwing his own package to the ground, he went to secure the stray animal, calling at the same time to Stony-heart,

“ Kick that sleepy dog till he wakens, that he may come and assist me with these packs.”

The Delaware, who was not a man of many words, proceeded forthwith to execute this order,

and, without putting down his heavy load, bestowed a sound kick upon the reclining figure, which, to his infinite surprise, started instantly to its feet in the shape of a powerful man, who threw him, encumbered as he was, upon the ground, and successfully resisted all his violent efforts to extricate himself. While one of the Osages came to assist in securing the fallen Delaware, the other two seized the unlucky horse-dealer, just as he was mounting in the hope of saving himself by flight.

So successfully had the Osages planned and executed this manœuvre, that in less than five minutes their two last prisoners were laid bound and pinioned together with the first in the canoe, where the captured bales and presents were also stowed away, and while one of the Osages took the horses to a ford not far distant, which had been recently crossed by a large herd of bison, the remaining three, with their prisoners, paddled across the river, and then noiselessly along the opposite bank, until they had reached a deep and winding creek, which fell into the main river, and which they had noticed by daylight as affording convenient fuel and shelter. Having pursued their way up the creek until they considered themselves safe from pursuit, and their fire from the observation of either encampment, they gathered and lighted a goodly pile of dry alder-wood, and proceeded deliberately to unpack and exa-

mine the bales and packages, throwing their three pinioned captives roughly on one side, as being so much live lumber unworthy of their notice.

The plunder that they found themselves thus suddenly possessed of exceeded their utmost expectations; and as it contained, amongst other things, a package of excellent dried meat and the kinne-kinnik, from which poor Stony-heart had expected so much gratification, they ate copiously of the former, and smoked copiously of the latter, until they were in the highest possible state of Osage enjoyment.

It was not long before they were joined by their comrade with the horses, who received, as soon as he had fastened the latter, his due share both of the provisions and the plunder; after which they un gagged the prisoners, at the same time giving them to understand that if they made the least noise they would be put to death immediately. Indeed, whether they were noisy or quiet, it seemed by no means improbable that such might be their fate, for two of the Osages strongly urged the necessity for so doing, under the plea of self-preservation. The leader seemed, however, to be of a different opinion, and he had already established a kind of prescriptive right of command over his comrades.

Having thrown some dry sticks upon the fire to make it blaze, he drew Stony-heart towards the light, and as it fell upon his countenance

enabled him to recognize in his prisoner one of the chief warriors of the Delaware band.

"Is Stony-heart become a mule," said he with a grin, "that he carries bales and blankets upon his back?"

To this taunt Stony-heart did not deign to reply, and a brief conversation ensued among the Osages; after which their leader came again to him, and having searched his dress, satisfied himself that the Delaware had no other arms with him than a knife and a small pistol concealed in his belt. The former he left untouched, but the latter he dipped in the creek until it was thoroughly soaked, and then returned it to the owner, whom, having now released from his bands, he thus addressed :

"Stony-heart may return to his people ; he is free ; and he may tell Wingenund that the Washashe know how to repay a good deed, as well as to revenge a bad one. Stony-heart may go !"

The Delaware waited no second bidding, but returned with all haste toward his camp, being obliged to swim the river, and muttering to himself, after he had crossed it, "I told Baptiste that no good could ever come of sparing the lives of those Washashe dogs !" such being the only gratitude that he either felt or expressed for the clemency that he had just experienced at their hands !

Soon after his departure, the Osages turned their attention to Besha, sternly questioning him

as to the part he had taken in their late chief's dispute with Wingenund; and in spite of all his protestations of impartiality and innocence, they stripped him of every article of clothing save his moccasins, and gave him a most severe flogging with a laryette of bull's-hide, after which they decamped, leaving him still pinioned, and writhing with pain, while they carried with them his attendant, whom they compelled to load and arrange the packs upon the horses, and to lead the latter for the first dozen miles of their route; after which they permitted him to return to release his master, who crawled back with difficulty, before daylight, to the Crow camp, having reaped the reward of his intrigues, cunning, and avarice, in the loss of all his presents, two of his best horses, and a flogging, from the effects of which he suffered for a long time.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCENE IS SHIFTED TO THE BANKS OF THE MUSKINGUM,
AND PRAIRIE-BIRD RETURNS TO THE HOME OF HER CHILD-
HOOD. *

ABOUT two months after the events related in the preceding chapters, there was an unusual stir and bustle in the town of Marietta, and half a score of its principal inhabitants were assembled in front of David Muir's house, to witness the landing of the crew and passengers belonging to a large boat that had just arrived at the wooden pier which projected into the river.

Foremost of a busy group at the water's edge was the sturdy form of Gregson the mate, whose orders respecting the bringing-to, and making fast, were implicitly obeyed ; and when at length she was securely moored alongside the pier, numerous and hearty were the greetings between those who stepped ashore from her, and the friends from whom they had been so long severed.

“ Bearskin, how are you ? my old fresh-water porpoise !” said the mate, squeezing the hard hand of the Mississippi boatman. “ How fares it, messmate ?”

"All right now, my hearty; but we've had some foul weather since I saw you last."

"Ay, I see!" said the mate, observing the scars upon his old companion's face and forehead; "you've been snagged, and damaged your figure-head a bit: never mind that; we'll have all that yarn out by and by over a bottle of David's best. See, here he comes to welcome you himself!"

Leaving David Muir and Bearskin to their mutual greetings, the mate returned to the water-side and lent his powerful assistance to the landing of the cargo of the heavily-laden boat; and certainly, a more strange or heterogeneous mixture of animate and inanimate stock never came out of any vessel since the disembarkation from the ark. Skins, furs, bows, rifles, moccasins, and Indian curiosities of every description, were piled near the bows, while in the after-part were stowed provisions of all kinds, and kegs, which were by no means so full as they were when the boat left St. Louis.

The appearance, language, and costume of the crew would baffle any attempt at description, inasmuch as each sunburnt, unshaved individual composing it, had equipped and attired himself according to his own fancy, and according to the contents of his remaining wardrobe after a long sojourn in the western wilderness; and when it is remembered that these hardy fellows were from all the varied clans and nations found between the sources and the mouth of the "Father of Waters," it is

not surprising that their mingled jargon should have struck upon the ear like the dialects of Babel in the day of its confusion. There were half-bred Creeks and Cherokees; Canadians, some with no little admixture of Chippeway blood; others, proud of their pure French descent: there were also some of the rough boatmen, who had already migrated to the banks of the Great River, where it washes the western boundaries of what are now the States of Kentucky and Illinois; and a raw-boned sinewy fellow, who acted as a sort of second mate, was giving instructions in broad Scotch, to a dark-eyed and diminutive individual, who replied to him in bad Spanish. Above the din of all these multifarious tongues, was heard the shrill and incessant voice of Monsieur Perrot, who was labouring with indefatigable zeal to collect his master's baggage, and to put it safely ashore.

This he was at length enabled to effect with the aid of David Muir and the mate; after which the articles destined for Mooshanne were piled in readiness for the waggon which was to convey them, and the remainder found their way by degrees to their respective destinations.

When at last the good-humoured valet found himself comfortably seated in the merchant's parlour with the worthy man himself, Dame Christie, Jessie, and the mate, for his audience, and a bottle of madeira, with some fried ham and fresh eggs upon the table, he gave a sigh, the importance of

which was lost upon none of those present, and he looked from one to the other with the conscious superiority of a man who knows how much he has to tell.

It is not our province to follow him through the “hair-breadth ‘scapes,” the “moving accidents by flood and field,” with which he set his astonished hearers “all agape;” the only portion of his narrative which it concerns us to know, is that which referred to the movements of Reginald Brandon and the remainder of his party, who might, according to Monsieur Perrot’s account, be almost daily expected at Mooshaanee, as they had left St. Louis and crossed its ferry with tent, baggage, and a large cavalcade, on the day of his embarkation in the great “Batteau.”

It was so long since Monsieur Perrot had tasted any liquid with a flavour like that of the merchant’s madeira, that he sipped and talked, talked and sipped, without noting the lapse of time, and the evening was already far advanced before he thought of rising to take his departure for Mooshaanee; even then, David Muir pressed him so strongly to remain with him over-night, and continue his journey on the following morning, that Monsieur Perrot found himself quite unable to resist accepting the invitation; especially as he thought that another day or two might probably elapse before the return of Reginald; and, moreover, the bright eyes of Jessie Muir looked a thousand times

brighter from the contrast that her beauty afforded to the swart dusky complexions by which he had so lately been surrounded.

Leaving the merry Frenchman, and his still wondering auditors in David's parlour, we will proceed without delay to Mooshanne, where it happened that, about four o'clock on the same afternoon, a single horseman sprang from the animal that, to judge from its appearance, had carried him far and fast, and, having rung the door-bell, waited not for any one to answer it, but walked straight into the vestibule.

The bell was still ringing when the door of the drawing-room was slightly opened that the blue eyes of Lucy might herself reconnoitre the new comer; the next moment saw her in her brother's arms.

“ Dear, dear Reginald ! ’tis he, ’tis he, indeed ! ” and she drew him into the room that her father might share her rapturous joy.

While the Colonel pressed his son to his heart in a fond paternal embrace, Lucy ran up stairs to prepare the more delicate nerves of her invalid mother for the shock of happiness that awaited her.

Scarcely were these first affectionate greetings exchanged, ere Lucy inquired with expectant eagerness, “ When will they arrive ?—how far off are they, Reginald ? ”

“ They cannot now be long ; I think within a

couple of hours they must be here. If I mistake not, Lucy, there is one of the party who begrudged me not a little my office of *avant-courier*."

Lucy blushed "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue," as she felt how her heart leaped within her to meet the one to whom her brother referred; and she hastened away to conceal her mingled confusion and happiness, in the thousand little details of preparation for her expected guests.

It may be as well here to mention, that immediately on reaching St. Louis, Reginald had dispatched a messenger on horseback to his father with a letter, containing the outline of the events connected with his western expedition, and informing him of the rescue of Prairie-bird, and of the attachment that existed between her and himself. He spoke not of her parentage, further than to say, that she had been carried off in childhood from her own family, who were of a lineage and descent altogether unexceptionable; and he entreated and conjured his father not to entertain, nor pronounce any objection to his proposed alliance, until he had an opportunity of seeing, hearing, and judging for himself.

Reginald had also insisted upon Ethelston's abstaining from this topic in any letter that he might wish to send from St. Louis, and the Colonel had thought it advisable to say nothing to Lucy of her brother's attachment, while there remained a doubt of its being such as he could approve or sanction;

so that he had only informed her that the party would bring back with them Prairie-bird, whom the young Delaware had mentioned so often as his sister, but who was, in fact, the daughter of English parents, of the highest respectability; and that she would be accompanied by Paul Müller, a missionary, whose reputation for piety and learning was extensively spread, and who had been, since her residence with the Indians, her instructor and adopted father.

Lucy's curiosity to see Prairie-bird had been, since the arrival of her brother's letter, extraordinarily excited. Sometimes she fancied her a half-wild, half-civilized being, clad in a dress of skins, and speaking broken English. Then again she was puzzled at the remembrance of the affectionate reverence, almost amounting to worship, with which Wingenund had spoken of her, and again her calculation was at fault. Under these doubts and perplexities, she consulted Aunt Mary, and with her aid and concurrence had prepared for her expected guest a room upon the ground-floor, that looked upon her own flower-garden. Its furniture was simple, but exceedingly pretty, being a kind of representation of a tent, of an octagon shape, and hung with a delicate-coloured pink chintz.

The view from the windows was lovely; for although the flowery parterres had lost their brightest summer hues, a few roses still lingered among them, contrasting with the thousand autumnal

colours that decked the shady mass of distant forests, between which and the flower-garden was seen here and there, through a leafy vista, the winding course of the Muskingum. Lucy had decked the interior of the room with all those nameless comforts and luxuries that betoken woman's affectionate care; several shelves were covered with well-selected books, and two china baskets upon the table were filled with such flowers as the indefatigable Aunt Mary had placed there, unconscious for whom she gathered them.

As soon as Reginald had enjoyed a short interview with his mother, whose health, though still delicate, had somewhat improved since he had last seen her, Lucy entered, and taking him by the arm, said, "Come, Reginald, you must inspect my preparations. See, this is your own room, which you will find rather more gay than when you left it, as Aunt Mary would have it new-papered. That beyond is destined, as before, for Ed—for Ethelston."

"Has Aunt Mary thought it requisite to new-paper that too, or did it occur to Miss Lucy without her Aunt's suggestion?"

Lucy punished him with a slight pinch on the arm; and then leading him down the stairs to the tent apartment, said to him, "Now, Sir, I will show you what I have prepared for your Indian lady; this is Prairie-bird's room."

The tell-tale blood rushed into Reginald's

bronzed and sunburnt cheek, as he stood within the room destined to contain his heart's treasure ; thoughts, far too sweet, and deep, and swift for words, mingled the past and the future in a delicious dream, as bending over his sister he kissed her fair forehead, and pressed her in silence to his heart.

With the intuitive quickness of sympathy, Lucy read in that expressive silence the secret of her brother's breast ; and looking up to him, half-reproachfully, she said, "Reginald, could not you have trusted your Lucy so far, as to tell her that Prairie-bird would have a dearer title to her affections than that of being Wingenund's sister, or the child of the Missionary's adoption ?"

"Dear Lucy !" replied her brother, with an impressive earnestness, that re-assured while it awed her, "there has been so much of the mysterious and merciful working of Providence in the history of Prairie-bird, that I am sure you will forgive me when I ask you to wait a few hours before all is explained to you. Meanwhile, receive her, for these few hours, as a guest ; if at the end of them you do not love her as a sister, my prophetic spirit errs widely of its mark."

Lucy saw well how deeply her brother's feelings were moved, and she prayed inwardly that her expected guest might fulfil his prophecy. It must be owned, however, that there lurked a doubt in her heart whether it could be possible

that a girl, reared in an Indian camp, could be to her a sister, or could be worthy of that brother, whom her fond partiality clothed with attributes beyond those which belong to ordinary mortals. Her affection for Reginald would not permit her to let him perceive these doubts; but fearful of betraying them by her manner, she left him in the room destined for Prairie-bird, while she hastened to aid the indefatigable Aunt Mary in some of the other preparations that were going forward; the Colonel having given orders that the whole party, of whatever rank or station, should be hospitably entertained.

Reginald was no sooner left alone, than casting his eyes around the room, a sudden idea occurred to him of preparing an agreeable surprise for his betrothed on her entrance to her new domicile. He remembered having seen below, in the drawing-room, a Spanish guitar, which he lost no time in securing; and having taken it from the case, he ascertained that it was a very fine instrument, and that the strings were in very tolerable order. He now laid it upon the sofa-table in her room, placing beside it a slip of paper which he took from his pocket, and which seemed, from its soiled and crumpled condition, to have suffered not a little from the various wettings to which, during the past months of travel, it had been exposed. Still he lingered in the room, noting with satisfaction

the various trifling luxuries and comforts which his sister had prepared for Prairie-bird, when suddenly he caught the sound of a bugle-note, in which he instantly recognised the signal to be given by Baptiste of the party's approach.

How did his heart beat within him as he flew to welcome them; yet were its throbbing pulsations like the quiet of sleep compared to those of the maiden, who now drew near the home of her infancy. Ethelston had leaped to the ground, and half supported her in the saddle with one hand, while with the other he checked Nekimi, whose impatient neigh betrayed his remembrance of the corn-bin, and the well-known stall.

“Edward—Edward, I cannot go through this!” said the half-fainting girl. “My thoughts are all confused—my brain turns round—see, there is the house! I cannot remember it. O, stay a minute—only one minute, that I may recover myself!”

“Dear Evy!” said her brother, looking up while she leaned affectionately upon his shoulder, “‘tis natural that your thoughts should be mingled and confused, but let them not be gloomy now! The house is so changed within the last ten years, that had you built it yourself you could not recognise it in its present state. Already I can distinguish dear Aunt Mary’s white cap and apron; and Lucy, longing to embrace a sister; the gray locks of the stately Colonel, and one

beside him, who will not be the last to welcome Prairie-bird !”

“ I can distinguish nothing, Edward; there is a mist before my eyes: but it is a mist of love and happiness unspeakable !”

“ Courage, dear Evy !” said her brother in a cheering tone; “ let them not think that Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, and that her heart regrets the change from the prairie to the scenes of her childhood, and the home of her choice !”

“ Edward !” said his sister reproachfully, while a tear started in her eye, and the blood mounted to her temples; then shaking back the dark locks from her glowing cheeks, as if she would thereby shake off the temporary weakness by which she had been overcome, she added, “ Remount your horse; we have yet some hundred feet to go; if Prairie-bird draws near with slow, unwilling step, it shall be Nekimi’s fault, and not her own !”

So saying, she shook the loosened-rein upon the neck of the fiery steed, which bounding forward with a spring that would have unseated a less practised rider, bore her swiftly to the door, where he stopped, obedient to her delicate hand, and champed, and frothed, and snorted, as if proud alike of his burden, and of his own matchless symmetry of form.

Never had her radiant beauty so thrilled

through Reginald's every nerve as at this moment, when, lightly touching his proffered arm, she sprang to the ground; her cheek glowing with agitation, and her eye moistened by contending emotions, she interchanged with him one silent look of conscious love, and then turned, with gentle grace, to receive the greeting of Colonel Brandon.

We have before said that he had been far from pleased with the contemplated alliance of his son, and had made up his mind to receive Prairie-bird with cold and studied courtesy, nor to treat her otherwise than as an ordinary guest, until he should have satisfied himself respecting her birth and connexions; but, in spite of himself, these resolutions vanished before the irresistible attractions of her manner and bearing, so that instead of only extending his hand as he had proposed, he imprinted a parental kiss upon her forehead, saying,

“ Welcome, heartily and truly welcome to Mooshanne !”

She tried to speak, but she looked on the half-remembered features of Reginald's father, and her collected strength began to fail. At this moment she was greeted by Lucy, whom she already knew to be the chosen of her brother's heart.

“ Prairie-bird must learn to love her sister !” whispered she, folding her in an affectionate embrace.

"*Learn, Lucy!*" replied Prairie-bird, whose tears could no longer be controlled; "*Learn!* can a few years have so changed our faces and our hearts, that Lucy and Evy must now learn to love each other?"

Before the astonished girl could reply, Aunt Mary, darting forward with frantic haste, exclaimed, "*What voice is that?*" then catching Prairie-bird by the arm, examined with wild intensity every line of her countenance. As she looked, the tears gathered in her own eyes, her frame trembled with agitation, and she fell upon her neck, saying, "*'Tis she—'tis my poor brother's long-lost child!*"

Lucy's heart told her that it was so indeed: Colonel Brandon was overcome with astonishment; but he read in the looks of Reginald and Ethelston that the lost treasure was restored; and as memory retraced in the features of Prairie-bird those of his attached and lamented friend, he, too, was unmanned; and grasping Ethelston's hand, wrung it with an emotion beyond the power of words.

The news spread like wild-fire throughout the house that Captain Ethelston's sister was returned; and Lucy was obliged to run with all speed to her mother's room to prevent a sudden shock of joy that might affect her weakly nerves. Is it possible to describe, or imagine the transports of the succeeding hour in that happy circle!

or the caresses showered upon Prairie-bird ! What word would the pen or tongue employ ? “ Congratulations ? ” As well might one attempt to represent Niagara by the water poured from a pitcher !

We will trust that hour to the reader’s heart, and will suppose it past, and that Lucy, with still tearful eyes, and her arm still round her recovered sister’s neck, was leading her from the room where she had just knelt to receive Mrs. Brandon’s maternal kiss, when in passing a half-open door, Lucy said, “ Evy, that is your brother’s room ; but he is not in it, he is still on the lawn.”

“ Oh ! I must look into Edward’s room,” exclaimed Prairie-bird ; and opening the door, she entered, followed by Lucy. A rifle, a fowling-piece, and a fishing-rod stood in one corner ; over them were ranged several pair of pistols, and two or three cutlasses, apparently of foreign workmanship ; in the opposite corner, near the window, was a globe, by the side of which stood a case filled with naval charts ; on the other side of the room was ranged a row of shelves well stored with books, and the writing-table in the centre was covered with papers all neatly tied and docketted, as he had left them at his last departure.

Prairie-bird’s eye wandered with a certain degree of interest over all these indications of her brother’s habits until it rested upon a small portrait, hung over the chimney-piece. It represented a

man of middle age and stature, and, although the painting was scarcely above mediocrity as a work of art, the expression of the countenance was strikingly open and benevolent. Prairie-bird gazed upon it until she thought that the mild orbs upon the inanimate canvas returned her affectionate gaze. With clasped hands and beating heart, she stood awhile silent, and then sinking on her knees, without removing her eyes from the object upon which they rested, she murmured, in a whisper scarcely audible, "My Father!"

It was indeed the portrait of his lamented friend that Colonel Brandon had kindly placed in Ethelston's room, a circumstance which had escaped Lucy's memory at the moment of her entering it.

Stooping over her kneeling companion, she kissed her forehead, saying, "Evy, I will leave you for a few minutes to commune with the memory of the honoured dead; you will find me in the vestibule below." So saying, she gently closed the door, and left the room.

In less than a quarter of an hour Prairie-bird rejoined her friend, and though the traces of recent emotion were still to be observed, she had recovered her composure, and her countenance wore an expression of grateful happiness.

"Come, Evy," said her young hostess, "I must now show you your own room; the cage is not half pretty enough for so sweet a bird, but it opens

upon the flower-garden, so you can escape when you will, and your dear good Paul Müller is your next neighbour."

An exclamation of delight broke from the lips of Prairie-bird as she entered and looked round the tented apartment, and all its little comforts prepared by Lucy's taste and affection. Fortunately, the day was beautiful, and the casement-windows being wide open, her eye caught, beyond the flower-garden, a view of the distant mass of forest, with its thousand varied autumnal tints, reposing in the golden light of the declining sun.

"Oh, it is too, too beautiful!" said Prairie-bird, throwing her arms around Lucy's neck; "I can scarcely believe that this is not all a dream!"

"There have indeed been some fairies here, or some such beings as dwell in dreams, Evy," said Lucy, whose eye fell upon the guitar lying on the table, "for I left this room a short time ago, and this instrument was not here then. Who can have brought it?—can you play upon it, Evy?"

"A little," replied Prairie-bird, colouring.

"And see," continued Lucy, "here is a scrap of paper beside it, so soiled and dirty that I should have put it in the fire had I seen it before; do you know the hand-writing, Evy?" As Lucy said this she looked archly up in her friend's face, now glowing with a rosy blush. "Well, you need not answer, for methinks, I know it myself; may I unfold the paper, and read its contents? What, no

answer yet; then I must take your silence for consent.” Thus saying, she opened the paper, while Prairie-bird, blushing still more deeply, glanced at it with longing, but half-averted eyes. “Verses I declare!” exclaimed Lucy. “Why, Evy, what magic art have you employed to transform my Nimrod brother, the wild huntsman of the west, the tamer of horses, and the slayer of deer, into a poet?”

She then proceeded to read in a voice of deep feeling, the following stanzas, which, although without any pretensions to poetical merit in themselves, found such acceptance with their present warm-hearted and partial judges that, at the conclusion of their perusal, the two girls fell upon each other’s neck, and remained locked in a silent and affectionate embrace.

*On over-hearing Prairie-bird’s Evening Hymn, “HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”**

Yes, hallowed be His Holy Name
Who formed thee what thou art!
Whose breath inspired the heav’ly flame
Now kindled in thy heart!
Whose love o’erflowing in thy breast
These vocal raptures stirred—
Whose angels hover round thy nest,
Thou orphan Prairie-bird!

Methinks, I see that guardian throng
Still mirrored in thy face!

* See vol. ii. chap. iv. page 81.

Thy voice hath stol'n their angel-song,
Thy form their angel-grace.
Oh breathe once more that plaintive strain,
Whose every tone and word,
Deep-treasured in my heart and brain
Shall dwell, sweet Prairie-bird !

Delaware and Osage Camp,
Tuesday Night.—R. B.

On the following day the family party at Moonshanne were assembled at luncheon under a large tree, on the banks of the Muskingum, from beneath the shade of which the gables and irregular chimneys of the house were seen through occasional openings in Lucy's shrubbery; while the deep river flowed silently onward, bearing away in its tranquil course the leafy tribute of autumn showered upon it by the light breath of the western wind.

Already had Prairie-bird visited the spot where her father's house had stood, the site of which was only to be recognized by a few heaps of stones and blackened timbers, over which the luxuriant mosses and lichens, with which that region abounds, had long since cast their mantle of green, while a few apple, plum, and peach trees, unprotected by hedge or fence, still showed "where once the garden smiled."

Colonel Brandon had not thought it advisable to rebuild either the house or the offices after their destruction by the savages, but had contented

himself with a careful administration of his late friend's property, leaving it to his son Edward to choose a site for his residence at a later period. Neither must it be supposed that our heroine had omitted to pay a morning visit to Nekimi, who now knew her voice, and obeyed her call like an affectionate and faithful dog. As soon as she came to the stable, into which he had been turned without halter or fastening of any kind, the generous animal, after saluting her with a neigh of recognition, rubbed his broad forehead against her shoulder, and playfully nibbled the grains off the head of maize which she held out to him; but even that he did not venture to do until he had acquired a claim to it by holding one of his feet up and pawing with it until she let it rest in her delicate hand. It must assuredly have been by mere accident that Reginald entered while she was thus employed, and reminded her how he had, with prescient hope, foretold this very scene amongst the rocky cliffs of the far distant Andes. Well did Prairie-bird remember the spot, and every syllable of that prophecy; neither did she affect to have forgotten it, but with a sweet blush held out one hand to her lover, while the other still played with the silken tresses of Nekimi's mane.

What a delightful occupation is it to caress a dumb favourite by the side of one beloved, when the words of endearing tenderness la-

vished on the unconscious pet are the outpourings of a heart sensitively shrinking from addressing them directly to their real object ! and if it be true that many a sleek and glossy spaniel has thus received the caress intended for its owner, how much more natural was it that Reginald and Prairie-bird should find pleasure in bestowing their caresses on a noble animal endeared to them by so many associations ; for while she remembered how often Nekimi had borne him in the chase and in the fight, he was not likely to forget with how true and unwearied a step the faithful steed had carried his betrothed over many hundred miles of mountain and of prairie ; and even now, as her hand rested in his, both by a conscious sympathy thought of Nekimi's former generous lord, and breathed a sigh over War-Eagle's untimely fate.

To return to our party assembled round the luncheon table under the venerable tree. The first tumult of joy had subsided, and was succeeded by a feeling of more assured happiness,— “a sober certainty of waking bliss,” which pervaded every breast. Aunt Mary contemplated her lovely niece with looks of the fondest affection, recalling in her sweet smile and in the expression of her features the beloved brother, whose loss she had with deep but chastened grief for many years deplored ; for a few minutes there was a general silence ; one of those pauses in which

each member of the party pondered, as if by a common sympathy, on the wonderful events which had led to their reunion. Lucy was the first to break it.

“Reginald,” said she, “you related to us yesterday-evening the commencement of your homeward journey, and how the Delaware called “Stony-heart” was permitted by the Osages to return unhurt to your camp: you must resume the thread of your tale where you left it, and tell us especially how and where you parted from dear Wingenund, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude greater than we can ever pay.”

“That do we indeed, Lucy,” replied her brother earnestly; “fortunate too is it that deeds of generous self-devotion like those done by Wingenund reward themselves, and that a debt of gratitude to one whom we love is a treasure, not a load upon the breast. You remember how a writer, who used to be a favourite with you, has expressed it:

‘A grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged.’”

“What a beautiful thought!” exclaimed Prairie-bird eagerly; “tell me the book wherein I may find it written. Such a lovely flower as that cannot surely grow alone; there must be others of similar beauty near it.”

“There are, indeed; fresh, fragrant, and abun-

dant as on a western prairie in June; ‘Paradise Lost’ is the garden wherein they grow; many of the descriptions contained in it are among the most beautiful in our language; I hope ere long to read them to and with you, dearest,” he added in a whisper, intended for her ear alone; “there are some lines descriptive of Eve as she first appeared to Adam, which always seemed to me exaggerated until you taught my eye to see and my heart to feel their truth.”

With a deep blush Prairie-bird cast her dark eyes upon the ground, while Reginald continued aloud, again addressing himself to Lucy.

“Our own adventures after we crossed the Platte river are scarcely worth relating; for although we had a few alarms from wandering parties of Pawnees, Omahaws, and Dahcotahs, our band was too strong and too well armed to fear anything from their open attack; and the ever-watchful care and sagacity of Wingenund left them no chance of surprising us.

“The warlike spirit and experience of his noble brother seemed to have descended, like Elijah’s mantle, upon the youth; and feeling the responsibility that attached to him as leader of the party, he allowed himself little rest either by day or by night, setting the watches himself, and visiting them repeatedly at intervals to ascertain that they were on the alert. He always came to our camp-fire in the evening, and I observed that he daily

became more interested in the conversation of our worthy friend the Missionary, and more anxious to understand the principles and truths of Christianity; in so doing he was not only following the bent of his own amiable and gentle disposition, but he felt a secret pleasure in the remembrance that he was fulfilling the last wishes of his dying brother. I dare say Paul Müller would now tell you that he would be thankful indeed if the average of professing Christians understood and practised the precepts of their creed as faithfully as Wingenund."

" That would I in truth, my son," replied the Missionary ; " nevertheless I cannot claim the honour of having been the instrument of the conversion of the Delaware youth or his brother ; it was effected, under the blessing of Heaven, by the patient, zealous, and affectionate exertion of Prairie-bird."

" Nay, my dear father, you do yourself grievous wrong in so speaking," said Prairie-bird reproachfully ; " and even were it as you say, to whom do I owe everything that I know? whom have I to thank that I was not left in the dark and hapless condition of the females by whom I have so long been surrounded ?"

" The tears gathered in her eyes as she spoke, and she pressed affectionately to her lips the hand which her adopted father extended to her.

" Yes, my sister speaks only the truth," said

Ethelston, addressing the Missionary in a voice of deep emotion; “ we all feel how far beyond the power of words we are indebted to you for all that you have done for her, and we only trust that some opportunity may be afforded us of showing a deep, sincere, and permanent gratitude that we are unable to express.”

Colonel Brandon, and every one of the family circle, rose as by a common impulse, and one by one confirmed by a silent pressure of the hand, the sentiment expressed by Ethelston. The venerable man, uncovering his head, and allowing the breeze to waive to and fro his silver locks, looked for a minute upon the kindred group before him, and thus addressed them :—

“ Think you not, my friends, that this scene, these happy faces, and this happy home, might well reward any degree or duration of earthly toil ? But toil there has been none, for the teaching and nurture of this sweet child has been from the first a labour of love ; and the only pain or regret that she has ever caused me, is that which I now feel, when I recollect that I must resign her into the hands of her natural guardians, and return to my appointed task, the occasional troubles of which will not any more be sweetened by her presence, nor its vexations be soothed by her affection. Such, however, is the will of Him whom I serve, and far be it from me to repine.”

“ Nay,” interrupted Reginald, eagerly, “ you

will not leave us yet. After the fatigues and trials of this summer, you will surely give yourself some repose."

"My son, I would gladly dwell awhile in this pleasant and happy abode; but I must not leave Wingenund to contend unaided against the difficulties by which his present path will be beset, the doubts and temptations which may assail him from within, and the sneers or scorn he may experience from the more proud and violent spirits of his tribe."

"There is, however, one service that you have promised to render before you take your departure from Mooshanne. Perhaps there are others here beside myself who will urge you to its faithful performance."

This bold speech threw the whole party into momentary confusion. Prairie-bird, pretending to whisper to the Missionary, hid her blushing face upon his shoulder; the conscious eyes of Ethelston and Lucy met; while Aunt Mary bestowed upon Colonel Brandon one of those knowing smiles, with which elderly ladies usually think fit to accompany matrimonial allusions.

The awkwardness was of short duration, for the mutual feelings of the parties betrothed were no secret to any present; and Reginald was not of a disposition to endure unnecessary delays, so he drew Prairie-bird with gentle force towards her brother, and still retaining her hand in his own, he said, "Ethelston, will you, as guardian of your

sister, consent to my retaining this fair hand? Beware how you reply, lest I should use my influence against you in a request which you may make to my father."

Had Ethelston been ignorant of his sister's feelings, he might have read them in the expression of her blushing countenance; but being already in full possession of them, and meeting a smile of approval from Colonel Brandon, he placed his sister's hand within that of Reginald, saying, "Take her, Reginald, and be to her as a husband, true, faithful, and affectionate, as you have been to me as a friend."

It will not be supposed that Ethelston waited long for the consent of either her father or brother to his union with Lucy; and Paul Müller agreed to remain at Mooshanne one week, at the end of which time the double ceremony was to take place.

While these interesting arrangements were in progress, the noise of wheels, and the tramp of many horses, announced the approach of a large party; upon which Colonel Brandon, accompanied by the Missionary and Aunt Mary, went to see who the new comers might be, leaving the two young couples to follow at their leisure. The Colonel was not long kept in suspense as to the quality of his visitors, for before reaching the house, he heard the broad accent of David Muir's voice addressing Reginald's attendant.

"Thank ye, thank ye, Maister Parrot," for so did he pronounce the Frenchman's name; "if ye'll just haud the uncanny beast by the head, Jessie can step on the wheel an' be doon in a crack. There, I tauld ye so; its a' right noo; and Jessie, lass, ye need na' look sae frighted, for your new gown's nae rumpled, an' Hairy will tak' the bit parcel into the house for ye."

"Indeed, father, I am not frightened," said Jessie, settling the side curls under her bonnet upon her glowing cheek, and giving the parcel to Henry Gregson, whose hands had for the moment encircled her waist as she jumped from the wheel to the ground. Several vehicles of various descriptions followed, containing the spoils and baggage brought back from the prairies, together with Pierre, Bear-skin, and all the members of the party who had accompanied Reginald and Ethelston, and who now came to offer their congratulation on the events attending their safe return; for the story of the wonderful restoration of Ethelston's sister to her family had already spread throughout the neighbourhood, receiving as it went various additions and embellishments from the lovers of the marvellous.

Meanwhile, Jessie Muir had gathered from Monsieur Perrot sufficient information respecting the true state of affairs, to set her mind at rest with respect to Reginald Brandon's intentions; and encouraged by the interest which the Colonel and Lucy had always taken in her prospects, she

felt a secret assurance that they would prove powerful auxiliaries in advocating the cause of Harry Gregson, and reconciling her parents to his suit. Neither was she mistaken in her calculation, for while the preparation for the entertainment of the numerous guests was going forward, Colonel Brandon, after a brief consultation with Ethelston, called David Muir aside, and opened to him the subject of the youth's attachment to his daughter.

It is difficult to say whether the surprise, or the wrath of the merchant were the greater on hearing this intelligence, which was not only a death-blow to his own ambitious hopes, but was, in his estimation, an act of unpardonable presumption on the part of young Gregson.

"Colonel, ye're surely no in airnest ! it's no possible ! Jessie, come here, ye hizzie !" said he, stamping with anger, and raising his voice to a louder pitch.

It happened that Jessie, being engaged in conversation with Monsieur Perrot, did not hear his call, and the Colonel took the opportunity of leading him a little further from the house, and entreating his calm attention to the explanations which he had to give. David walked on in silence, his face still red with anger, and his heart secretly trembling within him when he thought of his next interview with Dame Christie.

The Colonel, who knew both the weak and the good points of his companion's character, dexter-

ously availing himself of both, effected in a few minutes a considerable change in his views and feelings on the subject. He represented to him that Ethelston would now have a house and establishment of his own; that his property was already very considerable, and, with prudent management, would receive gradual augmentation; and that, from his attachment to Gregson, it was his intention to make the honest mate's son the managing agent of his concerns; to facilitate which purpose he, Colonel Brandon, proposed to advance a few thousand dollars, and to establish the young man in a suitable house in Marietta.

"David," continued the Colonel, "you and I have long been acquainted; and I do not think you ever yet knew me to give you counsel likely to injure your welfare or your prospects, and you may trust me that I would not willingly do so now. The young people are attached to each other; they may certainly be separated by force; but their hearts are already united. Harry is an honest, industrious, enterprising lad; he will start in the world with fair prospects; every year will lend him experience; and as you and I are both of us on the wrong side of fifty, we may be very glad a few summers hence to rest from active business, and to have about us those to whom we can entrust our affairs with well-placed confidence."

There was much in this speech that tended to

soothe, as well as to convince, the merchant. He was gratified by the familiar and friendly expressions employed by the Colonel, while his shrewd understanding took in at a rapid glance the prospective advantages that might accrue to the agent managing the extensive affairs of the families of Brandon and Ethelston ; added to this, he was at heart a fond and affectionate father ; and the symptoms of irritation began to disappear from his countenance ; yet he scarcely knew how to reply, and before even he meant to speak, the name of his gude-wife escaped from his lips.

“Leave me to manage Dame Christie,” said the Colonel, smiling. “Ethelston shall go into Marietta himself, and break the subject to her, founding his request upon his regard for the elder Gregson, who has served under him so faithfully ever since his boyhood. Come, my good friend, let us join the party : I do not press you for any reply now ; but if you should detect a stolen glance of affection between the young people, do not be angry with Jessie, but think of the day when you first went forth, dressed in your best, to win a smile from Dame Christie.”

“Ah, Colonel, ye’re speakin’ of auld lang syne now !” said the merchant, whose ill-humour was no longer proof against the friendly suggestions of his patron, though he muttered to himself, in an undertone, as they returned towards the house, “I ken now why Maister Hairy was aye sae fond

o' the store, when the ither lads were fain to win' awa to hunt in the woods, or to fish in the river ! Weel a weel, he's a douce callant, an' the lassie might aiblins gae farther an' fare waur ! ”

The preparations for the entertainment were still in progress, under the superintendence of Aunt Mary and Monsieur Perrot, the latter having already doffed his travelling attire, and assumed, in his jacket of snowy white, the command of the kitchen, when Harry Gregson, who had opened the Marietta post-bag, put a letter into the hands of Reginald Brandon, which he instantly knew, by the bold, careless hand-writing, to be from his uncle Marmaduke. He broke the seal, and read as follows :—

“ Shirley Hall, July 15.

“ DEAR REGINALD,

“ I have very lately received your letter, announcing your intention of making a hunting excursion in the west, in pursuit of bears, elk, wolves, Indians, and other wild beasts. I hope you'll come safe back, with a score or two of their outlandish brushes. After you left me, I began to feel very uncomfortable, and did not know what was the matter, for I was cold by night, and sulky and out of sorts by day. Parson Williams took me in hand; but though we drank many a bottle of old port together, and played drafts, and attended several road-meetings (which

you know was an amusement I had never tried before), it was all no use, and I began to think that I was on a down-hill road to the next world; but, somehow or other, it happened that I dropped in now and then to the parsonage, and whenever I had talked half an hour with Margaret, (you remember Margaret, the parson's daughter,) I felt in a better humour with myself and all the world. So matters went on, until one day I mustered courage to ask her to come up to the hall, and change her name to Shirley. She did so, and your old uncle writes with the halter round his neck. When I married, Perkins came down from London (the son of my father's solicitor) with a dozen boxes of parchment, in a post-chaise; and made me sign my name at least a score of times; after which I desired him to draw up two more deeds for my pleasure. These were for transferring to yourself, and to your sister, a legacy left me a few years ago by an old relation whom I had never seen, and whose money I did not want. The amount is forty thousand pounds; so there will be twenty thousand pounds a-piece for you, and you may set to work and clear (as you used to call it) an estate as big as the old county of Warwick. I explained what I was about to Meg, telling her, at the same time, that it was a debt that I owed you in conscience, having considered you for so many years as my heir, until her plaguing black eyes made a fool of me, and threatened

me with the prospect of brats of my own. For this she pulled my ears twice ; first, for calling her Meg instead of Greta, by which name she was known at the parsonage ; and secondly, for talking about the brats, a subject which always makes her cheeks redden. But I had no idea of putting the reins into her hand so early in the day, and I told her outright, that the first boy should be called Reginald, to please me ; and the second might be called Greto, to please her ; and the third might be called Marmaduke, to please the family ; on which, without waiting to hear any more, she bolted, and left me master of the field. I have just mentioned this, in order that you, if ever you get into a similar scrape, may know how to behave yourself. Mr. Perkins has completed his deeds of assignment, and has received my instructions to transfer the money to America by the next vessel, in bills upon Messrs. Powell and Co. of Philadelphia ; and though I have more than once found you as proud and as straight-laced as a turkey-cock where money was concerned, I know that you dare not, you dog ! — I say you dare not refuse, either for yourself or your sister, this token of the affectionate regard of your uncle,

“ MARMADUKE SHIRLEY.”

The flush that came over Reginald’s open countenance as he read this epistle from his eccentric but warm-hearted relative, did not escape the

watchful eye of Lucy, who was standing near him, and she anxiously inquired whether it contained any unpleasant intelligence.

“Read it, Lucy, and judge for yourself,” he replied, while he went to communicate its contents to Colonel Brandon.

We will leave to the reader’s imagination the mirth and festivity that reigned at Mooshaanee during that happy evening; how Pierre, Baptiste, and Bearskin talked over their adventures of ancient and of recent date; how David Muir’s grey eye twinkled when he detected Jessie exchanging a stolen glance with Harry Gregson; how the cheers rang through the forest when the Colonel proposed the health of Prairie-bird, the long-lost child of his dearest friend, the bride of his only son; and how Aunt Mary’s sweetmeats and preserves adorned her snowy table-cloth; and how Monsieur Perrot had contrived, as if by magic, to load the hospitable board with every swimming, flying, and running eatable creature to be found in the neighbourhood, dressed in every known variety of form. The healths of Ethelston and Colonel Brandon had not been forgotten; and the latter, observing a shade of melancholy upon his son’s brow, said to him aloud, “Reginald, you have not yet given your friends a toast, they claim it of you now.”

Thus addressed, Reginald, reading in the dark eyes of his betrothed, feelings kindred to his own, said in a voice of deep and undisguised emotion,

“ My friends, you will not blame me if I interrupt for a moment the current of your mirth, but it would be doing equal injustice, I am sure, to your feelings and to my own, were we to part without a tribute to the memory of one, now no more, to whose self-devoted heroism Ethelston owes the life of a sister, and I the dearest treasure I possess on earth: The memory of my Indian brother, War-Eagle, late Chief of the Delawares !”

The party rose in silence, every head was uncovered, a tear trembled on the long lashes of Prairie-bird’s downcast eye, and Baptiste muttered to himself, yet loud enough to be heard by all present, as he reversed his glass, “ Here’s to the memory of the boldest hand, the fleetest foot, and the truest heart among the sons of the Lenapé !”

As the day was now drawing to a close, David Muir returned to Marietta, Ethelston having promised to pay a visit to Dame Christie on the following day. The Merchant was so elated by the day’s festivities, that he winked his grey twinkling eye at Jessie, forgetting at the moment that she knew nothing of the conversation that had passed between the Colonel and himself; and when the youth in escorting them homeward, warned David of sundry holes and stumps upon the road, thereby enabling them to avoid them, he poked his elbow into Jessie’s side, saying, “ He’s a canny lad, yon Hairy Gregson ; what think ye, Jesse ?”

She thought that her father was crazy, but she said nothing; and a certain vague sensation of hope came over her, that all was going more smoothly for her wishes than she had dared to expect.

For the ensuing week the whole village of Marietta was enlivened by the preparations for the two-fold wedding at Mooshaanee; silks, ribbons, and trinkets without end were bought, and there was not a settlement within fifty miles in which the miraculous return of Reginald Brandon's bride was not the theme of discourse and wonder. Paul Müller became in a few days so universally beloved at Mooshaanee, that all the members of the family shared in the regret with which Prairiebird contemplated his approaching departure; and as they became more intimately acquainted with him, and drew from him the various information with which his mind was stored, they no longer marvelled at the education that he had found means, even in the wilderness, to bestow upon his adopted child. Colonel Brandon was extremely desirous to make him some present in token of the gratitude which he in common with all his family, felt towards the worthy Missionary, and spoke more than once with Reginald on the subject: but the latter stopped him, saying, "My dear father, leave us to manage that, we have entered into a secret conspiracy, and must

entreat you not to forbid our carrying it into execution."

The Colonel smiled, and promised obedience, knowing that those in whose hands the matter rested, were more familiar with the good man's wants and wishes than he could be himself.

At length the week, long as it may have appeared to Reginald and Ethelston, passed away. The morning which united them to those whom they had respectively loved through so many trials and dangers, arrived; and Paul Müller, having joined the hand of his beloved pupil to the chosen of her heart, prepared to take his leave, when she knelt to him for his blessing. With faltering voice and tearful eyes he gave it; she could not speak, but pointing to a small box that stood upon an adjoining table, with a letter addressed to him beside it, yielded to the gentle force with which her bridegroom drew her from the room.

Taking up the letter, the Missionary read as follows:—

"Oh, my beloved preceptor and father, let me once again thank you for all your goodness and affectionate care! for to you, next to my Father in heaven, do I owe all my present happiness, and all my knowledge of that Saviour who is my everlasting hope and trust. My heart would sink under the thought of being separated from you, if I did not know that you are returning to my dear

young brother Wingenund, to guide and assist him in the good path that he has chosen ; tell him again and again how dearly we all love him, and that day after day, and night after night, he shall be remembered in his sister's prayers.

" I am sure you will not forsake him, but will give him your advice in teaching his Lenape brothers, who have laid aside the tomahawk, to cultivate the earth, and to raise corn and other nourishing food for their little ones. You will also continue your favourite and blessed work of spreading among them, and the surrounding tribes, the light of the Gospel. Edward and Reginald tell me that for these objects nearest your heart, gold and silver can be usefully applied, and they desire me to entreat your acceptance of this box containing a thousand dollars, one half to be expended as you may think best for spreading Christianity among our Indian brethren, and the other half in seeds, working-tools, and other things necessary for Wingenund and those who dwell with him.

" I hope you will come and see us at least once in every year, to tell us of the health and welfare of Wingenund. If you can bring him with you, the sight of him will make glad our eyes and hearts.

" Farewell, dear father. Forgive the faults in this letter, remembering, that although I have read so much to you and with you, I have had little practice in writing, and neither Reginald nor

Edward will alter or correct one word for me ; they both smile and say it will do very well ; perhaps it may, for, without it, you know already how dearly you are loved and honoured by your affectionate and ever-grateful,

“ PRAIRIE-BIRD.”

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

SUPPOSING the gentle reader to have taken sufficient interest in Prairie-bird to be desirous of learning something of the after fortunes of herself, and those connected with her, we subjoin a letter which accidentally came into our possession, and which appears to have been written a few years subsequent to the date of the conclusion of the preceding tale.

" St. Louis, June 12th, 18—.

" DEAR ETHELSTON,

" I have just returned from my long-promised visit to Wingenund, whose village is situated, as you know, not far from the southern banks of the Missouri, about one hundred miles beyond St. Charles's. I found there our respected and venerable friend Paul Müller, whose intercourse with Wingenund and his band has been for some years almost uninterrupted, and productive of the most striking improvement, both in the village itself, and in the character and manners of its inhabitants. Several small settlements of Delawares are in the neighbourhood, all of whom acknowledge

Wingenund as their chief; and most of them have availed themselves, more or less, of the teaching of the exemplary Missionary.

"The village is situated on the side of a hill, gently sloping to the south, along the base of which flows a considerable stream, which, after watering the valley below, falls into the Missouri at a distance of a few miles. The huts, or cottages occupied by the Delawares are built chiefly of wood; and each having a garden attached to it, they present a very neat and comfortable appearance. That of Wingenund is larger than the rest, having on one side a compartment reserved entirely for the use of the Missionary; and on the other a large oblong room, in which are held their devotional meetings; the latter serves also the purpose of a school-room for the education of the children. You would be surprised at the progress made by them, and by many of the adults, in reading, as well as in agriculture and other useful craft; and I must own that when my eye fell upon their ploughs, hammers, saws, chisels, and other utensils, and then rested on the Bibles, a copy of which is in every dwelling, I felt a deep and gratifying conviction, that our annual present to Wingenund has been productive of blessings, quite beyond our most sanguine expectations.

"I need scarcely tell you, that his reception of me was that of a man welcoming a long-absent

brother. He fell on my neck, and held me for some time embraced without speaking; and when he inquired about his dear sister Olitipa, his voice resumed the soft, and almost feminine tones that I formerly noticed in it, when he was under the influence of strong emotion. In outward appearance he is much changed since you last saw him, having grown both in breadth and height; indeed, I am not sure whether he is not now almost as fine a specimen of his race as was his noble brother, whom I never can mention or think of without a sigh of affectionate regret. Yet in his ordinary bearing, it is evident that Wingenund, from his peaceful habits and avocations, has lost something of that free and fearless air, that distinguished his warrior brother. I have learnt, however, from Baptiste, (who, as you know, insisted upon accompanying me on this expedition,) that the fire of former days is subdued, not extinguished within him, as you will perceive from the following anecdote, picked up by our friend the Guide from some of his old acquaintance in the village.

" It appears that last autumn a band of Indians who had given up their lands somewhere near the head waters of the Illinois river, and were moving westward for a wider range and better hunting-ground, passed through this district; and seeing the peaceful habits and occupations of the Delawares settled hereabouts, thought that they might

be injured and plundered with impunity. They accordingly came one night to a small settlement only a few miles from here, and carried off a few score of horses and cattle, burning at the same time the dwelling of one of the Delawares, and killing a young man who attempted to defend his father's property. A messenger having brought this intelligence to Wingenund, he collected a score of his most trusty followers, and taking care that they were well armed, went upon the trail of the marauders. He soon came up with them; and their numbers being more than double his own, they haughtily refused all parley and redress, telling him that if he did not withdraw his band they would destroy it as they had destroyed the young Delaware and his house on the preceding night.

" This insolent speech uttered by the leader of the party, a powerful and athletic Indian, aroused the indignation of Wingenund; his eyes flashed fire, and his followers saw that the warrior spirit of his early days was rekindled within him. Ordering them to unsling and level their rifles, but not to fire until he gave the word, he drew near to the leader of the party, and in a stern voice desired him to restore the plunder and give up the murderer of the Delaware youth. The reply was a shout of defiance; and a blow levelled at his head, which he parried with his rifle, and with a

heavy stroke from its butt, levelled his antagonist on the ground ; then, swift as a panther's spring, he leaped upon the fallen Indian's chest, and held a dagger to his throat.

"Panic-struck by the discomfiture of their leader and by the resolute and determined attitude of the Delawares, the mauraunders entreated that his life might be spared, promising to give all the redress required ; and on the same day Wingenund returned to his village, bringing with him the recovered horses and cattle, and the Indian charged with the murder, whom he would not allow to be punished according to the Delaware notions of retributive justice, but sent him to be tried at a circuit court, then sitting near St. Charles'. This exploit has completely established our young friend's authority among his people, some of whom were, if the truth must be told, rather disposed to despise the peaceful occupations that he encouraged, and even to hint that his intercourse with the Missionary had quenched all manly spirit within him. You will be surprised to hear that he has married Lita, who was for a long while so deeply attached to his brother ; even had she been the wife of the latter, this would have been as conformable to Indian as to ancient Jewish usage. She now speaks English intelligibly, and asked me a thousand questions about Prairie-bird. Fortunately, she had chosen a subject of which I could

never weary; and I willingly replied to all her inquiries; when I told her that her former mistress and favourite had now three little ones, the eldest of whom was able to run about from morning till night, and the youngest named Wingenund, after her husband, tears of joy and of awakened remembrance started in her eyes.

“ I understood her silent emotion, and loved her for it. How changed is her countenance from the expression it wore when I first saw it! Then it was at one moment wild and sad, like that of a captive pining for freedom; at the next, dark and piercing, like that of the daughter of some haughty chief. Now you may read upon her face the gentle feelings of the placid and contented wife.

“ When I left the village, Wingenund accompanied me for many miles; twice he stopped to take leave of me, when some still unsatisfied inquiry respecting your Lucy, or Prairie-bird, rose to his lips, and again he moved on; I can scarcely remember that he uttered any distinct profession of his affection for any of us, and yet I saw that his heart was full; and what a heart it is, dear Edward! fear, and falsehood, and self, are all alike strangers there! When at length we parted, he pressed me in silence against his breast, wrung the hand of Baptiste, and turned away with so rapid a stride, that one who knew him not would have thought we had parted in anger.

“ On reaching the summit of a hill whence I could command a view of the track that I had followed, I unslung my telescope, and carefully surveying the prairie to the westward, I could distinguish at a distance of several miles, Wingenund seated under a stunted oak with his face buried in his hands and in an attitude of deep dejection. I could scarcely repress a rising tear, for that youth has inherited all the affection that I felt for him to whom I owe my Evelyn’s life !

“ Harry Gregson and his wife are very comfortably settled here, and appear to be thriving in their worldly concerns. I have been several times to his counting-house, and, from the returns which he showed me, your investments in the fur-trade, as well as in land, seemed to have been most successful.

“ Jessie’s looks are not quite so youthful as they were when she was the belle of Marietta, but she has the beauty of unfailing good-temper, which we Benedictts prize at a rate unknown to bachelors. Harry has promised to pay us a visit this autumn; he will be delighted with the new house that you have built for his father, since his promotion to the rank of Captain.

“ Perrot has found so many ‘ compatriots ’ here, that he chatters from morning till night; and his wonderful adventures, by ‘ flood and field,’ both in Europe and the Western Prairies, have rendered

him at once the lion and the oracle of the tavern at which we lodge.

“Distribute for me with impartial justice, a thousand loves among the dear ones in our family circle, and tell Evy that I shall not write again, as I propose to follow my letter in the course of a few days.

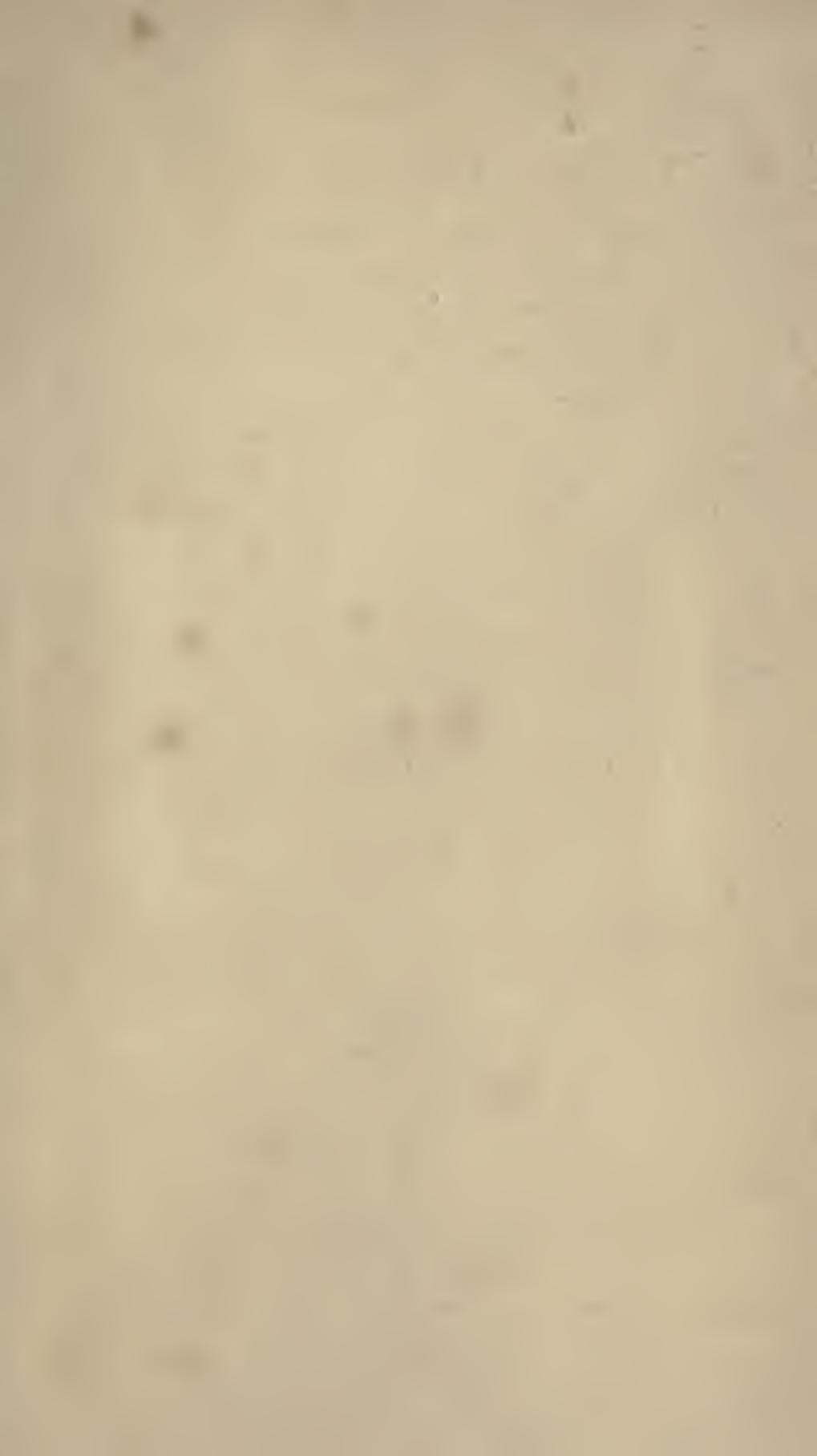
“Now and ever your affectionate brother,

“REGINALD BRANDON.”

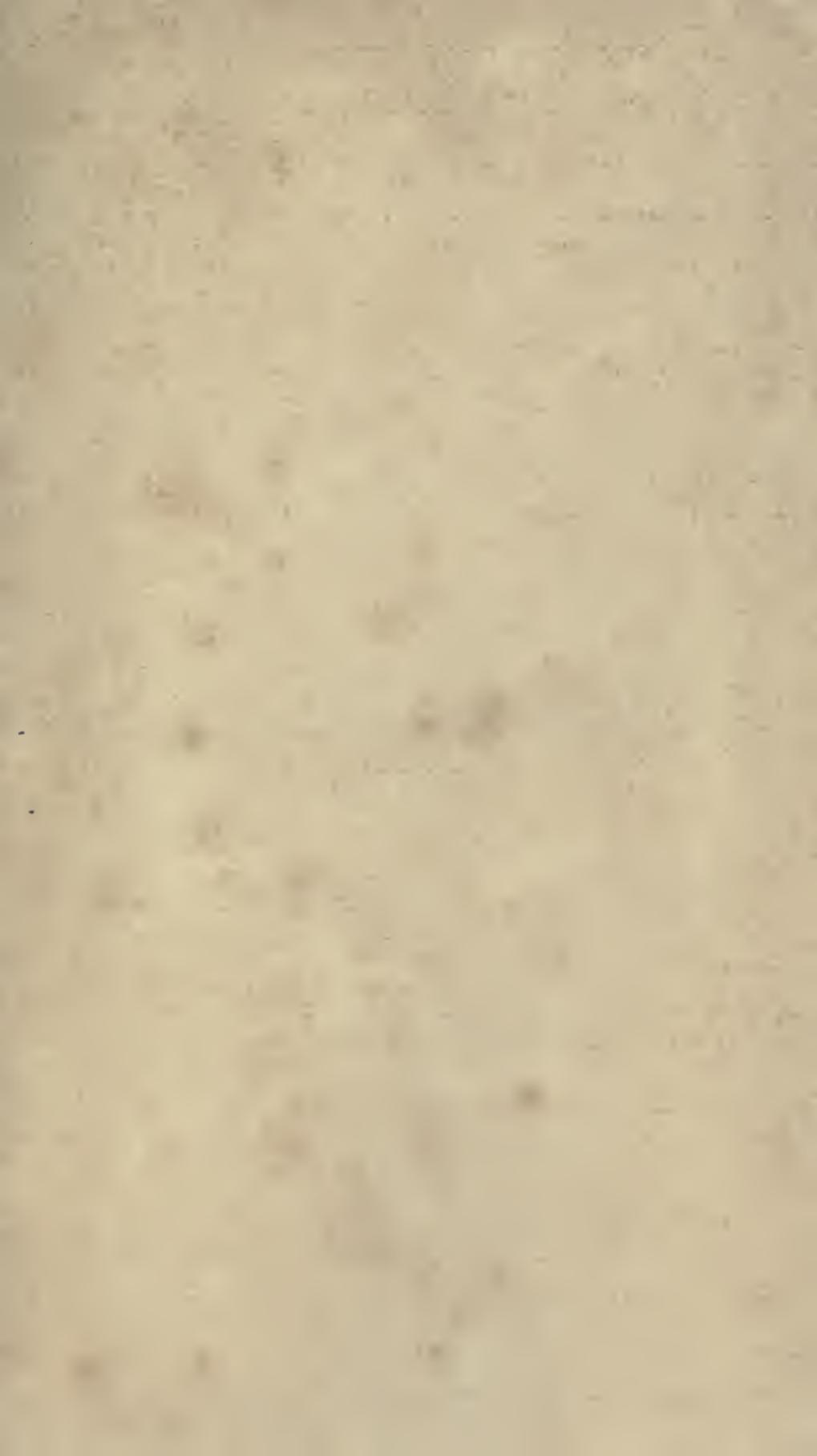
THE END.

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